

University of Bucharest, Faculty of History  
History Doctoral School

PhD Thesis in Ancient History and Archaeology

Gabriela Augustina Cojocaru

**Representations of Royal Power:  
Textual and Visual Discourse in Ashurbanipal's North Palace**

**Advisor:**

Prof. Dr. Gheorghe Vlad Nistor

**Referents:**

Prof. Dr. Christoph Uehlinger (University of Zurich)

Prof. Dr. Miron Ciho (University of Bucharest)

Prof. Dr. Lucretiu Birliba (Al. I. Cuza University of Iasi)

**President of the committee:**

Prof. Dr. Antal Lukacs (University of Bucharest)

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## **List of Abbreviations**

RIMAP – Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (A. K. Grayson (ed.), University of Toronto Press, 1987- )

RINAP – The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (G. Frame (ed.), Winona Lake Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011-2014)

CAD – The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (Chicago and Glückstadt: the Oriental Institute and J. J. Augustin, 1956- 2010)

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1. Objectives of the analysis**

This thesis proposes an analysis of the ideological program of Ashurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik): it seeks to identify and understand the messages the palace would have delivered about the king Ashurbanipal at the time it was built, within the administrative center of the Assyrian realm. Ashurbanipal (668-c. 630 BC) was the last Assyrian monarch to see Assyria at its peak and the North Palace was the last in the series of late Assyrian palaces containing reliefs displaying the king's achievements.

Different media were used to shape the king's image in the North Palace and the royal edifice will thus be treated as a whole ensemble of architectural, written and visual expressions of royal power. This analysis on the North Palace wants to find out how Ashurbanipal as king was represented in this particular setting and what roles the palace may have played for Ashurbanipal's reign. The underlying assumption is that "kingship" as concept refers to a constellation of ideas and ideals, normative order and certain ethics about what a king is and should be. Such constructions are not stable entities but objects of negotiation and discursive configurations, determined by contextual socio-political circumstances. Still, inside this construction there is room for the personal imprint of the king; he chooses where to situate himself in relation to these norms and by doing so he reshapes the ideas and ideals. At the same time, the king is surrounded by and is part of a whole apparatus of authority, which shapes and is shaped by the image of kingship. Constructed and transmitted through a variety of media, the image of kingship conveyed by the royal rhetoric is not a linear one, but rather differentiated and thoroughly conceived as to meet particular circumstances and audiences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. N. Porter has argued in several instances that the Assyrian royal propaganda (understood by the author as means to persuade, more than to inform, in order to influence political attitudes) bore differentiated messages about the king's power and dominance, according to the specific milieu the message was conceived for. See Porter, 2003 (a) for the analysis of three stelae of Esarhaddon bearing differentiated messages addressed to two cities in the same region, but which entertained different political relationships with Assyria (pp. 61-62). See

In order to grasp the royal messages of the North Palace, three different media which functioned as carriers of the royal rhetoric – textual and visual – are considered for a survey of the royal image in connection to this particular edifice: 1) Ashurbanipal's so-called "annalistic" editions commemorating the construction of the North Palace, 2) a series of collections of epigraphs preserved on clay tablets, with a certain relationship to Ashurbanipal's palatial reliefs and 3) the reliefs displayed on the walls of the North Palace. The different media had their own agendas, particularities, limits and permissiveness, according to their particular functions, formal conventions, intended audiences and so on. Furthermore, the architecture of the North Palace as such is a significant part of the investigation and the royal edifice is also considered for its specificity within the range of late Assyrian palaces.

By confronting different types of royal discourse and how they relate to one another, it is particularly aimed to achieve a more differentiated picture of the concept of kingship and how it was constructed in the particular setting of the North Palace. Analyzing this source material, focus will also be put on questions of how the tension ideal-reality was integrated and expressed in the representations of royal power in the North Palace and how the palace functioned to reinforce Ashurbanipal's rulership at the center of his realm, within a specific historical background and concerning a specific royal manifestation – palace building.

## **1.2. Prerequisites of the analysis**

The Assyrian royal palace has been interpreted as "conspicuous public embodiment of excessive consumption".<sup>2</sup> As such, the palace stood as a symbol of royal power: an embodiment of large amounts of energy and resources, emphasizing the ability of the king to dispose of such resources. Because the palaces were decorated with their owners' celebrated deeds, they were, J. Reade argues, individual achievements of particular kings, functioning as a "massive corpus of personal propaganda".<sup>3</sup> It is in a palace, more than in a "truly traditional structure such as a temple", J. M. Russell further adds, "that we would expect to find the

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also Porter 2003 (d) for an analysis of Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions showing how the text of the king's annals from the temple of Ninurta differed from the text inscribed across the walls of the throne room in his Northwest Palace at Kalhu (modern Nimrud), fitting to different audiences.

<sup>2</sup> Russell, 1998: 663. The author applies the theory of B.G. Trigger concerning monumental architecture of complex societies in the analysis of Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalhu.

<sup>3</sup> Reade, 1979: 331.

clearest expression of a king's personality".<sup>4</sup> However, the royal figure is always rendered in a conventional manner, albeit in various roles and poses; nowhere is there to be seen any personal physiognomic feature of a particular ruler; he is never shown, for example, in the different stages of his age, suggesting thus an ideal representation of kingship as office rather than of an individual. In this sense, I. Winter argued that the consciously applied program of the palace is rather a "reflection of the ideology of the state".<sup>5</sup>

The royal palace was certainly not the only vehicle of expression of royal power. It was the setting reserved for only a part of the royal activities, while other royal manifestations were ascribed to different other environments (building programs of various edifices, religious and military ceremonials in various locations, installation of monuments etc.). But it is only in the palace that the space is dedicated entirely to and dominated by the visual depiction of the king. The throne room of the palace was conceived as the seat of kingship par excellence.

The realities concerning royal palaces were, nevertheless, more complex. As D. Kertai has noted, not all late-Assyrian rulers built a monumental edifice bearing images with their own achievements and not all the palaces a king worked on during his reign bore reliefs with his exploits.<sup>6</sup> Most Assyrian kings ruled from the edifices of their predecessors. Several generations of kings sat on the throne in Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalhu (modern Nimrud) for about 150 years, without replacing or reworking the existent reliefs in order to exalt their own deeds. It may be postulated that the royal palace itself, as a symbol of kingship, contributed to the endowment of its main occupant with legitimacy, positioning him in line with past sovereigns and dynasties and recommending him as their rightful successor.

The perspective seems to have changed with Tiglath-pileser III and the Sargonid kings (Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal), who at some point or another during their reign proceeded to work on a palace which would necessarily be decorated with carefully selected scenes of their own most significant exploits. A palace with its builder's personal imprint became thus a more common act in the construction and manifestation of

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<sup>4</sup> Russell, 1991: 190.

<sup>5</sup> Winter, 2010 (a): 31 (Vol. 1). The article was first published in 1981 (in *Studies in Visual Communication* 7/ 2 (Spring), pp. 2-38). It was then reconfigured and appeared under a different title, with a different focus, in 1983 (see fn. 8).

<sup>6</sup> Kertai, 2013.

kingship for the late Assyrian rulers. While for Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II and Sennacherib a single palace and of a single type (the main royal residence in the administrative capital of the realm) was decorated with stone reliefs, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal seem to have initiated new practices, enhancing the range of royal edifices which would bear reliefs with the royal exploits. The meaning of the North Palace for Ashurbanipal's reign will be considered in such a context.

### 1.3. State of research

The foundation stone in treating the Assyrian palace as a whole, “massive corpus of royal propaganda” was set by J. Reade,<sup>7</sup> while the issue of the intention behind the decorative program of the royal palace was first addressed at length by I. Winter.<sup>8</sup> Questions about techniques and various subject matters in the palatial decorations were the focus of more studies by J. Reade in a series of articles.<sup>9</sup> Drawing on these directions, recent scholarship places the research of Assyrian palaces on inter-disciplinary grounds, combining approaches from Art History to Archaeology and Architecture. Extensive work in this sense was done by I. Winter<sup>10</sup> and J.M. Russell<sup>11</sup> in several publications. Most substantially treated from a programmatic perspective are the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu<sup>12</sup> and the

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<sup>7</sup> Reade, 1979 (a): 331.

<sup>8</sup> Winter, 1983, 2010 (a) (article first published in 1981). The author dealt with Assurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace, focussing on the role of the decorative program of the throne-room, its visual narrative, and its results when seen within the ideology of the state.

<sup>9</sup> Reade, 1979 (b) and (c).

<sup>10</sup> Winter, 2010 (a collection of the author's work). See, for example, Winter, 2010 (b), which is a survey of palaces in the ancient Near East. The palace is analyzed as physical as well as mental construction. The author argues for the equally important rhetoric (as mirror of the king) and residential/ administrative functions of the palatial edifices.

<sup>11</sup> Russell, 1991; 1998; 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Winter, 1983; Russell, 1998; Porter: 2003 (d). The Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu received special attention regarding the visual reconstruction, benefitting from a three-volume work by J. Meuszynski, and S. M. Paley and R. P. Sobolewski. Meuszynski, 1981; Paley and Sobolewski, 1987; Paley and Sobolewski, 1992. These studies led to a 3-D virtual reconstruction of its reliefs and rooms allowing for a real visual experience of the impact that architecture and decorations would have had on the contemporary visitor.

See <http://www.learningsites.com/NWPalace/NWPalhome.html> (Learning Sites Inc) (last accessed March 2015).

Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh.<sup>13</sup> Most recently, Kertai's study on late Assyrian palaces seeks to connect the archaeological and architectural information to their social implications, considering the palatial architecture as the setting in which court society developed its activity.<sup>14</sup>

The North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh has only been subject to sequential studies dealing with specific reliefs or texts. The relief slabs and fragments, scattered now in museums and private collections all over the world (with their greatest majority in the British Museum and Louvre), were traced down and published, together with an account of the 19<sup>th</sup> century excavation process, in R.D. Barnett's large size catalogue "Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668-627 B.C.)", in 1976.<sup>15</sup>

The literary process of Ashurbanipal's annalistic texts was examined by P. Gerardi in two studies.<sup>16</sup> However, these studies were written before the appearance of the very concise work of R. Borger in 1996 on Ashurbanipal's annalistic texts,<sup>17</sup> which filled in previous gaps in the classification of the texts. E. Weissert and H. U. Onasch<sup>18</sup> contributed with other additions of fragments; the latest contributions appeared in 2008 by J Novotny.<sup>19</sup>

The epigraphic texts related to Ashurbanipal's reliefs also received their share of attention. P. Gerardi analyzed the epigraphs in Ashurbanipal's palatial reliefs for their typology in a study concerned with the evolution of such texts.<sup>20</sup> J. M. Russell discussed one of the two series of epigraph collections written on clay tablets, which showed certain relationships with Ashurbanipal's palatial reliefs.<sup>21</sup> Starting from Russell's method of

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<sup>13</sup> Russell, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> See Kertai and Miglus, 2013. Early in 2015 the work of D. Kertai appeared; the author followed the architectural evolution of the palaces in three main cities of Assyria: Assur, Kalhu and Nineveh. See Kertai, 2015 (the architectural features of the North Palace are presented in Chapter 8, pp. 167-184).

<sup>15</sup> Barnett, 1976.

<sup>16</sup> The author dealt with the literary process in Ashurbanipal's annals related to the Elamite and Arab campaigns. Gerardi, 1988 and 1992

<sup>17</sup> Borger, 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Weissert and Onasch, 1992. Weissert, 1997. The latter article of Weissert announced at that time his writing of a PhD dissertation on Ashurbanipal's self-image in various sources, including new, unpublished material; it appears that this study was not published or remained inaccessible to me by the time of the present writing.

<sup>19</sup> Novotny, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Gerardi, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Russell, 1999 (Chapter 9).

tackling with the epigraph collections of the first cycle, the second series of such epigraph collections will be addressed in this thesis.

Other studies touching on the North Palace concerned iconographic treatment of specific scenes,<sup>22</sup> styles<sup>23</sup> and subject matters. Of the latter, the lion hunt depictions in the North Palace received most attention.<sup>24</sup>

No programmatic analysis of the North Palace at Nineveh as a whole has been undertaken so far. A starting point for the present study was the article of P. Albenda regarding the program of one hypothetic room of the palace, the so-called “Room S”, with a focus on Assyrian landscape in reliefs and the famous royal banquet scene.<sup>25</sup>

Given the recent studies on iconographic treatment of ancient images as sources for ancient history, the more recent clarifications on Ashurbanipal’s annals, and the most recent structured architectural information on late Assyrian palaces, the present thesis proposes an analysis of the North Palace as a whole. It seeks thus to contribute to a better knowledge of the royal expressions of Ashurbanipal’s palatial edifice, integrating its whole architectural setting with its (surviving) visual and textual aspects and seen against a particular historical context. As no new source material is added in the present study, this endeavour is to a certain extent a process of bringing together previous disparate works and building further on their basis.

#### **1.4. Sources**

Apart from the monumental palatial architecture itself, the concept of kingship was transmitted through different media in the royal palace. Three types of sources for the royal discourse in the North Palace of Ashurbanipal are considered here:

##### **1.4.1. Royal inscriptions**

Royal inscriptions are texts which boast about the achievements of the king; generally, they were inscribed on a variety of supports (stelae, prisms, stone slabs with or without

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<sup>22</sup> Reed, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Watanabe, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Cassin, 1981; Watanabe, 2002; Weissert, 1997; Dick, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Albenda, 1976, part 1; 1977, part 2.

reliefs, tablets etc.) and were written in a variety of literary forms. The royal inscriptions concerned here are the **annals** of Ashurbanipal,<sup>26</sup> glorifying the king's military exploits and composed in order to commemorate particular building projects.<sup>27</sup> The annals can contain one military campaign or a set of campaigns. They are known from several editions inscribed on prism-shaped clay tablets, issued throughout the reign of Ashurbanipal. Most prisms survived only fragmentary; the editions were reconstructed from various fragments and were labeled with letters attributed in the order of their identification. Attribution of fragments to one or another of the editions proved to be a very difficult task. According to the latest studies on Ashurbanipal's prism fragments, the annalistic editions can be classified as follows (in chronological order):<sup>28</sup> E (consisting actually of at least two editions), B/D (identical text, but different building projects) C, Kh, G, T, F, A and H/J (apparently same text, but in different scripts: Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian); another annalistic text, similar to Edition(s) H/J, was displayed on the walls of the Ištar temple at Nineveh (see Appendix 1 for the dates of redaction of the editions). There are discrepancies between the editions, with several military incursions gathered as a single campaign, omissions of others previously mentioned, differences of details and different order of narration, proving that each text had its own agenda and answered the necessities of a particular situation or context.

The building activities they are concerned with (where the respective passage in the text was preserved) involve temples in both Assyria and Babylonia, walls of cities, the arsenal palace at Nineveh, and, importantly for the present thesis, the construction of the *bīt redūti* as royal residence, that is, the North Palace. Two editions of the annals, with a similar text up to a certain degree, commemorate the construction of the North Palace – Editions F and A.

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<sup>26</sup> The annals are an Assyrian genre, born with the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I (11<sup>th</sup> century BC) from a blend of epic narratives and chronicle, leading to a praise of the king's military exploits rendered in heroic terms in a chronological arrangement. The exploits are always rendered in first person as if accounted by the king, addressing an audience invited to learn about the king's glory and perpetuate his name. Tadmor, 1997: 327-328. For discussions on Assyrian royal inscriptions, see the volume of Fales, 1981. The term "annals" concerning Ashurbanipal's inscriptions recounting his military affairs is somewhat of a misnomer, as the military accounts are not rendered in chronological order, but otherwise comport all the features of this genre. See Gerardi, 1987: 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ashurbanipal's annalistic texts were transliterated and translated by Streck, 1916; Luckenbill, 1927; Piepkorn, 1933 (only partly); Borger, 1996. See also Weissert and Onasch, 1992; Weissert, 1997; Novotny, 2004, 2005 and 2008 for further clarifications and classification of the annalistic editions of Ashurbanipal.

<sup>28</sup> According to Borger, 1996, with re-evaluations by Novotny, 2008.

There is clear evidence that some of the exemplars were found bricked up in various walls of the palace itself.<sup>29</sup> The precise finding spot of many other prisms of Ashurbanipal remains unknown. While they can be put in connection with the edifice they commemorated, cases are known when they actually stemmed from elsewhere; although celebrating the refurnishing of the *akitu* house of Ištar at Nineveh, one prism (T) was actually recovered from the temple of Nabû at Nineveh.<sup>30</sup> Prisms with the annals of Ashurbanipal stem not only from Nineveh, but also from Kalhu (fragments belonging to Edition Kh) and Babylon (fragments bearing the text of Edition H, written in Neo-Babylonian script, but with no further archaeological context recorded).

The thesis focuses on Editions A and F, whose texts commemorate the construction of the North Palace, and the royal image conveyed by them. However, the texts cannot be treated outside their relationship with previous editions of the annals, the differences and novelties having the role of underlying the particular royal representations the texts celebrating the palace were meant to emphasize at that particular time and with that particular occasion.

The annalistic texts recounting the king's exploits and celebrating the palace building were traditionally displayed on the walls, thresholds and winged bull colossi throughout the palace, as well as written on prisms and cylinders to be buried in the foundations.<sup>31</sup> At the time of Ashurbanipal, however, they were ascribed only to buried prisms, the lengthy inscriptions having been dropped from the reliefs and thresholds, while the bull colossi were

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<sup>29</sup> A prism was reported found by H. Rassam during his first expedition in the 1850's in Room H, at the corner of the wall, behind the only preserved reliefs of that room (slabs 7-9); fragments duplicating the same inscription were found in the debris of another chamber, but without further details recorded; during the second expedition in 1870's, Rassam found the so-called "Rassam Cylinder", which was very well preserved, counting around 1300 lines; a letter reports the finding of yet another prism, counting about 1275 lines, in the wall between Room N and the Northwest part of passage K. Rassam, 1897: 33 (see also last footnote on page), opp. p. 118 (for image of "Rassam Cylinder") and 221.

<sup>30</sup> Prism T was discovered by C. Thompson at the foundation of the Southeast door of the Nabû temple at Nineveh. Thompson, 1931: 29. This was a common practice as proven, for example, by several cylinders with the early annals of Sennacherib, commemorating his building of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, which were recovered from the palace proper, as well as from a wall of a gate of the city, close to a bull colossi, and from Assur. See RINAP 3/1: 29-30.

<sup>31</sup> For a survey of texts in the context of late Assyrian palaces preceding Ashurbanipal, see Russell, 1991: 32. Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal's grandfather, had already discarded the lengthy annalistic texts separating the registers of the reliefs, but had them extensively written on bull colossi and, very rarely, on thresholds in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh.



omitted altogether from the North Palace. Thus, after their burial these items and their texts would no longer be visible to further audience. Their message must have addressed an audience concerned with their creation, including the king himself, as well as perhaps whatever ceremony would have accompanied their deposal at the foundation of the constructions.

#### **1.4.2. Collections of epigraphs**

The second type of material considered is the collections of epigraphs written on clay tablets;<sup>32</sup> some of the epigraphs in these lists appear as actual captions in the palatial reliefs: one in Room M and one in Room I in the North Palace and up to seven epigraphs in Room 33 in the Southwest Palace, a room decorated by Ashurbanipal (see location of Room 33 within the palatial complex of Sennacherib in **Pl. 2**, No. 6). Others may have been contained by the now missing or damaged relief slabs. When they appear in both the reliefs and the collections, they are almost identical (with minor variations).<sup>33</sup> Many other epigraphs from the collections are nowhere to be found in the reliefs; likewise, there are many relief epigraphs not found in the tablet collections. However, the epigraphs rendered in these collections share the same subject matter with part of Ashurbanipal's palatial reliefs. The collections deal with two thematic cycles: 10 tablets contain epigraphs concerned with the campaign against Teumman (king of Elam) and Dunnanu (king of the Aramean Gambulu, in southern Babylonia), which is also the subject of the visual narratives in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace and Room I of the North Palace; 11 tablets contain epigraphs concerned with Šamaš-šumu-ukin – Tammarišu II – Arabs activities, which were relief subjects in several spaces of the North Palace, including the throne room suite.

The tablets never mix the two cycles. The collections bearing the first cycle show several differences: different order of epigraphs, variations in text, additions and omissions of

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<sup>32</sup> Translated partially by Luckenbill, 1927: 394-405 (1039-1117); translated as composite texts by Weidner, 1932-33. The collections of epigraphs of one cycle (out of two cycles) were translated and discussed by Gerardi, 1988 and Russell, 1999: 158-164 (concerning Elamite affairs). Most recent transliteration of all of Ashurbanipal's epigraph collections was provided by Borger, 1996: 297-319 (Chapter VIII), without translation (as not many changes from Weidner's rendering of the texts were made, according to the author himself. See Borger, 1996: 297).

<sup>33</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 20.

epigraphs. The tablets bearing the second cycle (more fragmentary) don't display such differences (as far as corresponding parts of tablets are preserved). While the first cycle has received attention in several studies,<sup>34</sup> the second one was not discussed.<sup>35</sup> The thesis addresses this issue, as this second cycle was directly connected to some of the reliefs of the North Palace, a connection explicitly made by the preserved colophones on some of the tablets, which mention the *bīt redûti* (that is, the North Palace). The tablets come from Nineveh, but their exact archaeological context is not recorded.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.4.3. Reliefs within the palace

When discussing the visual sources for the analysis of the North Palace, two components are taken into account, but considered together: the reliefs proper (visual representations) and the short textual insertion they contained (epigraphs).

The **visual representations** were images carved in relief on large alabaster stone panels and displayed on the walls of Ashurbanipal's North Palace. The visual representations can take a *narrative* form, with a coherent sequence of the episodes of a story or a story rendered in its culminating point, or a *non-narrative* form, such as (protective) figures unengaged in any developing action.<sup>37</sup> The visual narratives in the North Palace show military affairs, royal hunt and connected activities, all being part of a common pool of subjects for late Assyrian palace decoration, but comporting specific variations. The non-narrative displays are various protective figures known otherwise from contemporary ritual texts dealing with expelling evil from a house.<sup>38</sup> Some of them were taken over from the predecessors, while others were newly introduced in palatial decoration with the North Palace. Most reliefs of the North Palace were found in their original architectural context (although many of them badly damaged). However, a number of reliefs, presumably from an upper storey, were found in a

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<sup>34</sup> Reade, 1979 (c): 99-101; Gerardi, 1982; and especially Russell, 1999: 158-199.

<sup>35</sup> The collections of the second series of epigraphs was edited and translated as a composite text by Weidner, 1932-33; they were re-edited text-by-text by Borger, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Prior to Ashurbanipal there is only one known case of a preserved such collection tablet, from the reign of Sennacherib, stemming from Nineveh, with none of its epigraphs rendered in the palatial reliefs. Gerardi, 1992: 18.

<sup>37</sup> On historical narratives and their visual expressions, see Winter, 2010 (a) and 2010 (b).

<sup>38</sup> The ritual texts (of which one copy was written for or stored in Ashurbanipal's library proper) were published by Wiggermann, 1992.

secondary location, where they presumably ended up after the walls of the rooms they originally decorated fell.

Ashurbanipal decorated not only the walls of the North Palace, but, most certainly prior to the building of the latter, also a few spaces in the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, located short distance away from the North Palace. Most clearly ascribable to Ashurbanipal in this location are the reliefs in Room 33 (see **Pl. 2**, No. 6), bearing epigraphs to attest it. The same subject matter (a particular military campaign) was also depicted in a room of the North Palace (Room I), but apparently with some differences of composition.

**Epigraphs** – or captions – were occasionally inserted in the visual narratives.<sup>39</sup> Although they are cuneiform texts, written in Neo-Assyrian script, they are considered here part of the pictorial discourse as well and treated as such. The captions were used in three ways: they introduced Ashurbanipal as the protagonist of the action (and narrator) and specified the action proper when placed above or in front of the king; they also introduced enemy figures and the actions they were involved in; lastly, they were simple labels identifying by name a specific city. Not every scene contained epigraphs and not all representations of cities were labeled. When they were used, they functioned for arresting and guiding the view in the right direction of the narrative and give emphasis and specificity to figures, actions and cities.<sup>40</sup> Twenty-four epigraphs survived in the reliefs of the North Palace; eight more were attached to Ashurbanipal's reliefs in Room 33 of Sennacherib's Southwest palace, which he probably decorated prior to the construction of the North Palace. The epigraphs were inserted and explain scenes concerned with military aspects, hunting, and banquet. Two plaques with epigraphs of Ashurbanipal, which were probably attached as such to the reliefs, were also recovered; however, no record of their original context exists.

In his reliefs in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace and in the North Palace, Ashurbanipal discarded all the other types of texts formerly displayed on walls, bull colossi or thresholds, focusing only on the visual narratives proper, which had now a more refined relief and increased number of epigraphs to structure and explain the visual information.

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<sup>39</sup> Ashurbanipal's epigraphs in both the North Palace and Room 33 of the Southwest Palace are transliterated, translated and discussed in Gerardi, 1988. Epigraphs were introduced in palatial reliefs by Tiglath-pileser III (at Kalhu), and were extensively used by Sennacherib in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, as he was the first to give up the inscription band along the palatial walls. See Russell, 1991: 32.

<sup>40</sup> Gerardi, 1988, 15.

Although recorded among the findings at the spot, many relief slabs are now missing without trace, while others, considered unfit for the British Museum and Louvre at the time of their discovery, were left on their location and buried again. In the thesis the discussions on the reliefs in the North Palace are based on the images published in R.D. Barnett's catalogue.<sup>41</sup> Only a brief selection of plates will be provided by the thesis, especially concerning the reliefs of two rooms discussed in detail as case studies.

What the thesis does not take into account is the role of the painting which once covered the reliefs, because only feeble traces of color have survived (traces of red paint on some body parts of protective figures). An idea about the colors used in palatial reliefs is provided by most recent studies on some of Sargon II's palatial reliefs.<sup>42</sup> Undoubtedly, colors would have created a certain impact on the viewer, playing thus an important role in the process of delivering the message, but this aspect eludes us.

### **1.5. Methodology**

The approach of the study is a historicized and contextualized interpretation of the North Palace and the textual and visual royal rhetoric attached to it. The investigated textual and visual sources and the palace as a whole are considered in their historical, archaeological, architectural and cultural settings. Their meaning is to be understood when considering not only their content, but also the place these texts and images and the media to which they were ascribed occupied in the physical space as well as in their creators' worldview. The analysis considers the function of the investigated sources as well as the web of relationships between them. As tools, the investigation relies on the archaeological and architectural information, as well as on literary critique and methods in art history.

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<sup>41</sup> Barnett, 1976.

<sup>42</sup> Conservation work on reliefs from Sargon II's reliefs from his palace at Dur-šarrukin (modern Khorsabad) has demonstrated that the reliefs contained significant amounts of ancient pigments. Good examples come from several rooms: on a relief from Façade (n) traces of paint show that the crown prince had red rosettes on his head band and the ribbons hanging down his back were also red; the eyes of the prince and dignitaries were painted with white and the pupils with black; hair and eyebrows were also painted black. Sargon's crown on a relief from Façade L seems to have been painted red, and traces of red are also on his robe. Shoes of king and courtiers were painted red or blue. The flames of a city under siege in Room 2 were also red. Red and blue were the horse trappings in Room 7; here, needles of trees appear to have been blue, same as birds and the water of a lake (of a darker hue); in Room 10 spear heads, bows, and arrows seem to have been colored red. Guralnick, 2013.

Some remarks need to be done at this point concerning the nature of the sources we have at hand for the investigation. The sources are silent about what actions were ascribed to specific spaces in the palace and also about who the occupants were – permanent or just conducting their activities there. Nothing is known about how the members of the court were organized in a palace complex either, or about court ceremonials.<sup>43</sup> As such, several architectural aspects are considered by modern literature when trying to grasp an impression on such matters, but which need to be considered with reserve: material remains, presence or absence of reliefs, their subject matter (if different subjects suggest different or multiple functions), location, accessibility or seclusion, architectural features such as entrances, niches, type of pavement and so on.<sup>44</sup>

The royal inscriptions, boasting with the king's unmatched achievements, are not to be taken as straightforward accounts of historical events, but considered in their rightful literary and social place in a particular historical time. More than historiographical texts, it has been argued in modern literature, the royal inscriptions are expressions of royal ideology, narrating events central to a king's rulership, but they do this through specific literary conventions, using well-established motives and literary devices.<sup>45</sup> They were written in various literary forms and were ascribed to different media, displayed or buried in different places.

When it comes to ancient images and their use as historical sources in understanding the societies which produced them, attention was drawn to the need of putting them "back in their social and historical contexts, where they functioned as media of socially meaningful communication".<sup>46</sup> The historian's role in this context would be "to reconstruct the rules of communication on the basis of primary data".<sup>47</sup> What is being represented is not to be taken as photographs of what happened or "snapshots" of actual events, since much of the ancient visual rendering has to do with the constraints of contemporary pictorial conventions.

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<sup>43</sup> See also Kertai, 2015: 5. The author argues that many assumptions in this sense stem from comparison with much later, but better known Ottoman court, as embodiment of an "oriental kingship", considering particularly the seclusion and inaccessibility of the royal palace and its various spaces.

<sup>44</sup> Wicke and Greenfield, 2013: 73-74 with previous bibliography in fn. 23. See also Russell, 1998: 663-664.

<sup>45</sup> On approaches which combine history, linguistics and literary theories in the analysis of Assyrian royal inscriptions, see a collection of studies published in Fales, 1981. See also Tadmor, 1997.

<sup>46</sup> Uehlinger, 2007.

<sup>47</sup> Uehlinger, 2007: 189, 222.

Several aspects are used by art historians when interpreting ancient images. One aspect, particularly stressed by C. Suter, refers to the “information theory”, expanded from the interpretation of written text and applied especially in the analysis of the relationship between text and image on the same monument. It takes into account the existence of a communication chain composed of: source (sender) – encoding the message into a system of symbols (writing or images) – channel of transmission (media) – decoding the message by the intended audience – and finally arriving to the receiver.<sup>48</sup> It stresses the fact that the sender and the receiver shared a common knowledge of their world and that the modern “reader” is by no means the intended audience. It also points to the importance of knowing the cultural background and the roles image and writing occupied in it. Most of the population at the time was unable to read and write. In this context, images were means of communication which would have been understood by a larger audience. On their part, in a largely non-literate world, writing possessed power through its special, non-universal status and, as such, empowered in turn the objects it was inscribed on through its simple presence, ultimately emphasizing the position of those who controlled it. Carving his images in stone and writing on monuments were the exclusive privileges of the king in Assyria. In order to recognize such power, one needed not necessarily know to read.<sup>49</sup>

The discussed images need to be integrated into their social context, their meaning being grasped only in conjunction with other available sources and the web of relationships of the item with its environment. The reliefs in Ashurbanipal’s palace need to be analyzed with a thought to the whole ensemble of the palace, to other relevant visual sources from similar palatial contexts, and the relationship of the reliefs with the written sources referring to the same subject matters. The meaning of their visual message is then obtained when the information is read in parallel with the reconstructed historical background of Ashurbanipal’s reign.

Both reliefs and texts are the final outcome of a whole process involving a variety of specialists in various fields, from stone cutters, through scribes and artists, to professionals dealing with mantic issues – as suggested by the existence of protective figures guarding the entrances or buried in the foundations. The palace itself is the result of architects and constructors. Different groups of specialists with their own knowledge and rules were thus

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<sup>48</sup> Suter, 2000 (with regard to sculptures of the III<sup>rd</sup> millennium king Gudea of Lagash).

<sup>49</sup> Russell, 1991: 9-10.

involved, and we may assume different teams within these groups. Throughout the whole process certain information and ideas about the king were promoted and dispersed in various circles and transformed into images and texts (with, most certainly, many trials in between).<sup>50</sup> They are the work of a circle of artists and scribes from the royal milieu, those who had access to and shaped the information about the king. Exposed to this intellectual construction of kingship, the specialists internalized within themselves and their milieu and at the same time constructed anew and disseminated the royal image.

In short, neither reliefs nor texts are to be taken as sheer accounts of the actual events they refer to. Instead, they are evidence of how the king saw himself and wanted to be seen (along with the elite circle whose exponent he was), that is, as an expression of the royal ideology in the way it was manifested through certain media in connection to the royal palace. A conscious selection of subject matters was implied, in order to produce a certain effect on the audience that would relate the occupant of the throne with an ideal image of kingship. Their configurations were not by chance, but had a meaningful purpose for those who created them and for the intended audience, who, sharing the same cultural background, assumingly understood, in various levels, the written and the displayed messages and the allusions implied. The creative process had to rely nevertheless on the pictorial and textual conventions of Assyrian art and types of texts in use at the time, as well as on the conditions of the spaces and the supports they were ascribed to. A certain degree of habitual factor must have also been inclined by just taking over already established customs related to palace construction and decoration and royal inscriptions writing.

Throughout the analysis, the North Palace is compared with previous late-Assyrian palaces, especially with Sennacherib's "Palace without Rival" (the Southwest Palace) at Nineveh, where Ashurbanipal most certainly spent part of his reign, at least prior to building his own royal edifice. It would be expected that Sennacherib's palace was Ashurbanipal's immediate source of inspiration in the decoration and arrangement of the North Palace. The differences from the royal edifices of his predecessors and all the more from the "Palace without Rival" point to the specific aspects of kingship Ashurbanipal emphasized as best fitted to embody and transmit his royal power through the North Palace. The contextualized interpretation of the sources ultimately leads to a better understanding of the North Palace at Nineveh as a coherent statement about Ashurbanipal's rulership and the particular challenges

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<sup>50</sup> See Uehlinger, 2007: 217. See also Porter, 1993: 109-110.

the building of the palace addressed. It also provides a better understanding of the concept of kingship in ancient Assyria in general by identifying how the norms respond to particular historical circumstances in shaping a certain image of the ruler.

### **1.6. Structure of the thesis**

In order to achieve its goals, the study is structured in the following steps: 1) it first contextualizes the North Palace within the line and range of late Assyrian palaces, in order to grasp its specificity (**Chapter II**). For this, a survey of the late Assyrian palaces is given, emphasizing those palaces which bore reliefs with royal achievements. Then the discussion narrows down to Ashurbanipal as palace builder and the place of the North Palace within his palatial building programs. The surveys in all cases are considered against the historical background in which the palaces appeared. Next, the North Palace is considered for its archaeological context against the claims in its building accounts and for its architectural context within the pool of architectural features of late Assyrian palaces.

2) Secondly, the thesis investigates the textual sources (**Chapters III-IV**) concerned with the royal representations connected to the North Palace.

Chapter III deals with the building accounts of the North Palace – Editions F and A of Ashurbanipal's annals. For their full comprehension and in order to grasp the specific royal image they convey in connection to the palatial building project, the building accounts of the North Palace are considered within the editorial context of the king's annals, which is further considered in relationship to the historical moments which generated the commissioning and up-dating of the annalistic editions. The discussion on the annals in Chapter III is joined by **Appendix 2**, which provides a detailed account of Ashurbanipal's military campaigns in order to provide a picture about how they were configured and reconfigured throughout the editorial process in order to explain tensed historical moments. The Appendix provides an up-dated account of this editorial process, according to the more recent studies and clarifications regarding the assignment of fragments to one or another edition.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Previous accounts of Ashurbanipal's editions of the annals were written by P. Gerardi in 1987 and 1992, before the minute and comprehensive work of R. Borger in 1996, which was followed in turn by more recent clarifications by J. Novotny in 2008.



Chapter IV investigates the epigraph collections on clay tablets for the proposals of royal image taken into consideration by those in charge of shaping it, dismissed, or reconfigured before reaching the final visual shape in the reliefs. The second thematic cycle of these collections (concerning Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his allies), with less attention in modern literature, is emphasized in this chapter, as it connects directly to the North Palace reliefs, according to the colophones such lists preserved, having thus an important role in the program the builders of the North Palace would have conceived.

3) Lastly, the reliefs come under scrutiny (**Chapters V-VII**). The visual representations are analyzed in the ensemble of the room they belonged to, the rooms themselves in the ensemble of their suite of chambers, and lastly within the whole royal edifice.

The process starts with the general survey of the reliefs in the unearthed spaces of the palace (Chapter V). The reliefs are analyzed for formal aspects (the rules of how to “read” the relief narratives) and visual effects (given by size, symmetry, or conspicuous placement of scenes), as well as for the mechanisms used in their construction (Assyrian artistic conventions).

The thesis then addresses the reliefs found out of their original context, possibly from an upper storey, for which a logical sequencing and the relationship with the architectural setting is not possible to establish (Chapter VI).

Lastly, the visual analysis narrows down to two case-studies: Room F and the Throne Room M (Chapter VII). Room F preserved all its reliefs allowing for a complete analysis and understanding of its program; it becomes a point of reference for less well preserved rooms. Room M, whose relief is fragmentary, functioned as the throne room proper, the main reception hall of the palace and was the most representative setting for the king enthroned. Based partly on the observations in the analysis of Room F and on the full scale analysis of the sources related to the North Palace, a hypothetical reconstruction of the throne room is proposed (schematized in **Pls. 26 and 27**). Furthermore, Room F functioned as bathroom space in a secondary suite; a similar chamber in the North Palace functioning as bathroom (Room V), but positioned in another suite, was not decorated. These investigations allow for a series of observations regarding the relationship between architectural features, visual renderings, and possible function of spaces in the North Palace.

**Chapter VIII** – the Conclusions – provides a synthesis of the information gradually unfolded by the sources under investigation. It puzzles together the information for the program of the North Palace as a whole, pointing to the aspects of kingship which were most emphasized in this particular royal setting in relation to the historical context of Ashurbanipal's reign.

The analysis is complemented by a **Chronological chart (Appendix 1)** with selected political events of Ashurbanipal's reign. Since Grayson's 1980 chronology of Ashurbanipal's reign,<sup>52</sup> no up-dating has been made; in the meantime, studies focusing on various political affairs (especially Elamite history and the Arabs), as well as further completion and disambiguation of Ashurbanipal's annals have appeared. The study provides such a reconfigured table of events, which is referred to throughout the discussions. Specific events, more or less complex, are referred to by label names throughout the study (e.g. Arabs 1, Arabs 2, Arabs 3 etc.). The actions behind the labels are given in the Chronological chart.

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<sup>52</sup> Grayson, 1980.

## II. Contextualizing the North Palace

One of the main manifestations of kingship was that of undertaking building projects – of cities, temples, walls, canals, aqueducts and, importantly for our discussion, palaces. According to the royal inscriptions commemorating such events, the building projects were connected to the wealth poured in the country by the king's military victories; military success was in turn connected to the king's priesthood performed on the gods' liking, which brought him in return divine support. The palace in particular is straightforwardly said in inscriptions to have been built with the flow of tribute and the labor of defeated enemies brought under the king's sway by the gods;<sup>53</sup> thus, its physical existence would have stood as a reminder of the king's military prowess and his divine support.

The king did not build or restore one palace alone, but a complex of royal edifices. He would always have a main palace, most likely the main royal residence and the center of the administration, either built by him anew or taken over from his predecessors. This palace was always located on the citadel overlooking the city. When the king undertook such a construction program, lengthy inscriptions commemorating it were written down and they were either displayed in the palace itself (and sometimes even in other locations) or ascribed to prisms and cylinders to be buried (or both). They generally took the form of annalistic texts, recounting the king's military victories, booty and tribute. It is normally this palace that bears reliefs with the king's achievements.<sup>54</sup>

The old palaces in the various cities of the realm were also periodically restored and probably used when the king's activities required his presence there either for administrative, personal or religious demands. Special attention from all kings received the so-called "Old

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, a passage in one inscription of Sennacherib, regarding the construction of the "Palace without Rival": "I forcibly removed [the people of Chaldea, Aramean (tribes), the land of the Manneans, (and) the lands Que and Hilakku, who had not submitted to my yoke, then I made them carry] baskets (of earth) [and they made bricks. I cut down canebrakes in Chaldea and I had their splendid reeds hauled (to Nineveh) for its (the palace's) construction by enemy soldiers] whom I had defeated.", RINAP 3/1: 45 (Text 2, lines 41-43).

<sup>54</sup> In D. Kertai's typology of late Assyrian palaces this would be the "Primary Palace" of an Assyrian king. Kertai, 2015: 2.

Palace” at Assur, the ancient capital and cultic center of Assyria.<sup>55</sup> This palace never accommodated reliefs of any king.

Military palaces (or arsenals, where the troops were gathered, military equipment stored and training took place, among, most certainly, other activities)<sup>56</sup> were also part of the complex of royal edifices and their building was of great importance for the royal image; lengthy texts were written on prisms and clay cylinders in order to celebrate them. However, these palaces were never built on the citadel and usually bore no reliefs with the king.<sup>57</sup>

According to the royal rhetoric of the inscriptions, all types of royal edifices were constructed for the same reason: as the king’s royal residence and for his lordly leisure (including the arsenals), not allowing thus to distinguish precise royal activities ascribed to one or another of these buildings. In theory, they all could have served as his royal residence. They would also have gardens and parks organized around them with trees and plants brought from the far regions the Assyrian conquests reached (they were especially called replicas of Mount Amanus).

The king also built residences for the members of the royal family, but always in smaller size, not on the citadel and apparently not celebrated beyond short texts written on bricks used in the construction proper; they attested the king’s name and titles and the family member for whom the palace was built.<sup>58</sup> Such residences never bore narrative reliefs glorifying neither the builder, nor the owner.

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<sup>55</sup> Built by Ashurnasirpal II (most certainly on the grounds of an even older palace), the “Old Palace” at Assur became the burial place of the Assyrian kings (at least five graves are known). Some of the Sargonid kings may also have been buried there. See Kertai, 2015: 48-54 and RINAP, 3/2:23-24.

<sup>56</sup> This type of palaces had a specific name – *ekal mašarti* – and appears in documents only starting with Sargon II. See Kertai, 2015: 2.

<sup>57</sup> In Nineveh, the arsenal was built on one of the two mounds of the city, but on the smaller Nebi Yunus one (see **Pl. 1** with Nineveh plan).

<sup>58</sup> Sennacherib built palaces for two of his sons at Assur: for his *second* son Assur-ili-mubalissu (who was in the service of the god Assur) RINAP 3/2: 260-267 (179-185); for his eldest son Assur-nadin-šumi (who would become king of Babylon) RINAP 3/2: 285-286 (205-206). Another son, Assur-šumu-ušabši, had a house built for him in Nineveh, close to the city wall (500 m from the citadel, in the so-called “Sennacherib’s House” area) RINAP 3/2: 141-144(98-100). Another construction project was undertaken by Sennacherib in Nineveh, 600 m from the smaller mound Nebi Yunus, but the nature of the building is not known because the respective inscriptions are not published; see **Pl. 1** with the plan of Nineveh and RINAP 3/2: 18.

The North Palace of Ashurbanipal was neither of these types of royal residences, but the result of a newly introduced practice concerning palatial building with reliefs, as it will be shown in the following discussion.

This chapter contextualizes the North Palace within the line and range of late Assyrian palaces. Similarities with and differences from its predecessors point to the particular character of the North Palace and how kingship was reflected in this setting. In order to achieve this, the chapter is structured in four sections. The first provides a survey of the late Assyrian rulers who built palaces containing reliefs with the royal image. In the process, attention is given to palace building accounts, in order to grasp the importance of the construction for the king's reign. They are seen against the historical background in which they occurred. The second section narrows the focus on Ashurbanipal as palace builder. Thirdly, the archaeological information available on the North Palace is presented against the claims of the texts celebrating its construction. Lastly, the architectural layout of the North Palace is discussed in comparison with the pool of the architectural features of late Assyrian palaces. The information is summarized at the end of the chapter.

## **2.1. Late Assyrian palaces and their builders**

Not all kings built a palace with reliefs of their exploits and not all the palaces a king worked on contained such decorations carved in large-sized stone panels; mostly, only the main residence in the capital city had them. Stone reliefs from Assyrian royal residences were recovered from as far back as the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, starting with the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu (ancient Nimrud), displaying narrative reliefs with scenes of the king's most important accomplishments and texts relating to them, as well as non-narrative reliefs with ritual scenes and figures of protective creatures.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> In the Assyrian art, narrative reliefs are known starting with the altar of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 BC). By the time of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) and Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) such visual narratives are found on bronze gate-bands and obelisks. Ashurnasirpal II is the first to introduce narrative reliefs on the walls of the palace. For an introduction in the Assyrian reliefs of the palaces, see Collins, 2009.

### 2.1.1. From Ashurnasirpal II to Esarhaddon

**Ashurnasirpal II** (883-859 BC), with whom a first phase of territorial expansion started (reaching from the Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea), ruled initially from Nineveh.<sup>60</sup> He succeeded his father on the throne without recorded complications. Early in his reign, though, he established a new administrative center for his empire in the city of Kalhu (Nimrud), previously of little importance in the sources,<sup>61</sup> which continued to be built in grandiose size all throughout his reign and later under his successor Shalmaneser III. On the citadel of the city he erected the large scale Northwest Palace, with reliefs displaying his achievements.<sup>62</sup> The king was depicted in several stances: receiving tribute from subjects, actively involved in the siege of cities and leading the troops, attending a stylized palm-tree in the company of protective figures with cone and bucket, hunting lions and bulls and libating over their carcasses.<sup>63</sup> In the inscriptions the palace was always celebrated not on its own, but as part of the construction project of the entire city. The texts with the building account were displayed along the reliefs of the palace proper, on floor slabs and on colossi,<sup>64</sup> or in places such as temple precincts and on various objects.<sup>65</sup> The Old Palace at Assur was also worked on; however, the royal inscription set on its slabs was actually the standard inscription of the

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<sup>60</sup> Documents from his first two years record tribute being brought at Nineveh. Kertai, 2013: 22 and 2015: 17. See RIMAP 2: 200 (A.0.101.1, i 100-101).

<sup>61</sup> The project is framed as the rebuilding of an ancient city, previously constructed by a predecessor, having become old and dilapidated. Ashurnasirpal, the texts say, built it anew with the people and reaches poured in from successful military campaigns. The earliest text mentioning its construction is dated to 879 BC (RIMAP 2: 237 (A.0.101. 17)).

<sup>62</sup> See plan of the palace in Kertai, 2015: Pl. 4. In terms of suites, the palace had a throne room suite, a smaller reception/residential suite, a double sided suite and a dual core suite. To these, several courts, terraces, and other spaces are added.

<sup>63</sup> All these scenes are concentrated in and around the throne room suite – its façade containing tribute bearers and its insides all the other actions. Other spaces in the palace bore renderings of the stylized palm-tree. Porter, 2003 (d). The stylized tree, so often represented in Ashurnasirpal's reliefs, was put in connection with agricultural abundance as a divine gift and the king acting as an intermediary between the will of gods and his subjects. Porter, 2003 (c): 18-20. For more discussion on this pictorial motive, see also Porter, 2003 (b).

<sup>64</sup> For example RIMAP 2: 223-228 (A.0.101.2), at the end of the account of his hunting and military successes, and RIMAP 2: 268-276 (A.0.101.23 – the so-called “standard inscription”).

<sup>65</sup> For example, on a stele set at the entrance to the Ninurta temple in Kalhu. RIMAP 2: 237-254 (A.0.101.17); the text also contains advices against the palace being abandoned, having its functions changed or future kings building a new one. An inscription celebrating it was also displayed in the Old Palace at Assur.

Northwest Palace at Kalhu, celebrating this latter project and the building of the whole city of Kalhu. The new built city was thus tied to the ancient capital of Assyria and introduced to the administration residing there. No arsenal palace existed at this time in Kalhu and there is no work on any armory recorded in Ashurnasirpal II's known inscriptions.

Subsequent rulers, from his immediate successor Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC) to Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC), lived in and maintained Ashurnasirpal II's Northwest Palace as their main royal residence, without altering the reliefs or adding any of their own. **Shalmaneser III** undertook the construction of a military palace in Kalhu, in the lower town (Fort Salmanesser), perhaps sometime around his 13<sup>th</sup> year of reign,<sup>66</sup> without decorating its walls with narrative reliefs of his exploits. Although several items in the palace contain inscriptions recounting the king's military victories,<sup>67</sup> none of them was written to celebrate its construction proper. In fact, there is no known inscription of this king to specifically celebrate his arsenal palace.<sup>68</sup>

It was more than one century later that another king decided to build another palace to glorify his deeds in reliefs.<sup>69</sup> **Tiglath-pileser III** (745-727 BC), the king with whom a second phase of territorial and military expansion began, apparently decided to move from Ashurnasirpal II's edifice and initiated his royal residence elsewhere on the citadel at Kalhu (the so-called "Central Palace"). The outline of the palace proper is actually not known, but its existence is revealed by slabs with his inscriptions found in secondary context; apparently they were about to be used as source material in another construction project of Esarhaddon

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<sup>66</sup> The military campaigns referred to in the inscriptions on the throne base in this palace go no further than his 13<sup>th</sup> regnal year. RINAP 3: 101-104 (A.0.102. 28). Inscriptions found on threshold slabs mention his 15<sup>th</sup> regnal year. See, for example, RINAP 3: 106-108 (A.0.102.30).

<sup>67</sup> Inscriptions on the throne dais, which also bears reliefs with the king receiving tribute, glorify the king's military achievements; but the throne basis with their inscriptions and reliefs were commissioned by a high official of Salmanesser III (Šamaš-bela-usur, governor of Kalah) and not the king himself. See RIMAP 3: 101-102 and 137 (A.0.102. 28 and 57).

<sup>68</sup> A significant number of this king's inscriptions with his military affairs do not contain a section of the building project. Those which do are concerned with other projects (wall, gates and temples) mostly at Assur. See Shalmaneser III's inscriptions in RIMAP 3: 5-179.

<sup>69</sup> The period after Salmanesser III witnessed difficult times, with rebellions of Assyrian cities and his sons fighting for the throne. The following kings exercised short reigns in a climate of instability and territorial loss. During this time there are no known important royal building projects, as far as the recovered sources are concerned. See a short description of the period following Salmanesser III in Russell, 1999: 232-233.

on the citadel at Kalhu.<sup>70</sup> The royal edifice was decorated with scenes of his military achievements and inscriptions with his annals; the palace was celebrated as a lordly residence for the king's pleasure.<sup>71</sup> Shorter annalistic texts (summaries) were also written on clay tablets and one of them preserves the building report celebrating the palace construction.<sup>72</sup> It was built with the knowledge inspired by the god Nudimmud (Ea), roofed with scented cedar wood, and meant to serve as royal residence, together with a *bīt hilani*, a replica of a Hittite palace, for the king's pleasure.<sup>73</sup> The various parts of the palatial complex and gates received names. Although protective figures and their precious decorations are mentioned in the text to have adorned the palace, as well as decorations for the threshold and gates, no visual narratives are mentioned.

Judging by the unfinished nature of the slabs, the palace may have never been completed and Tiglath-pileser III may have still ruled from the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II.

**Sargon II** (722-705 BC) ascended to the throne in times of turmoil and rebellion all throughout the realm, perhaps after his brother Shalmaneser V had cancelled the privileges of the old city of Assur (and so probably of the elites there).<sup>74</sup> His ascension to the throne may have raised issues of legitimacy because he was not the appointed heir. However, he managed to secure his position on the throne.<sup>75</sup> Early in his reign (already in his 5<sup>th</sup> year), he started to work on a completely new royal city, away from Kalhu and closer to Nineveh, yet independent from both.<sup>76</sup> He named it after himself: Dur-šarrukin – “Fortress of Sargon”

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<sup>70</sup> Kertai, 2013: 17-18 and Russell, 1999: 88-98.

<sup>71</sup> RINAP 1: 19-79 (Texts 1-34, the “Kalhu Annals”). See Text 25 for the fragmentary ending part of the annalistic text, celebrating the construction of the palace. Summaries of the annalistic texts were also inscribed on pavement slabs (the texts are incompletely known due to the slabs' poor state of preservation); see RINAP 1: 94-113 (Texts 39-45).

<sup>72</sup> The text (composed later in the king's reign – in 728 BC) is known from a clay tablet from Kalhu (Nimrud), perhaps stemming from the palace itself. It may have been an archival copy of a text inscribed on actual slabs within the palace or elsewhere. See RINAP 1: 115-125 (Text 47).

<sup>73</sup> RINAP 1: 123-125 (lines 17-36).

<sup>74</sup> At least this was the explanation given by Sargon II in one of his inscriptions (the “Assur Charter” – K 1349 in British Museum). See Luckenbill, 1927: 69-71 (132-135).

<sup>75</sup> In the context of general rebellion (against his brother or against him?), the king probably assumed the throne name *Šarru-kin* (“The king is true/ legitimate”), a programmatic name which would have portrayed him as the king who set the country back in order.

<sup>76</sup> Albenda, 2003: 6. Russell, 1999: 99. J.M. Russell (1991) argues that Sargon II consciously emulated Ashurnasirpal II's deeds, including the foundation of a new capital in his 5<sup>th</sup> year of reign. We may assume that



(modern Khorsabad). This was rather an exceptional enterprise, with only few previous examples (Tukulti-Ninurta I at Kar Tukulti-Ninurta in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu).<sup>77</sup> On the citadel he built a monumental palace, whose walls were adorned with reliefs of his deeds.<sup>78</sup> The reliefs displayed mainly military achievements and processions of officials (including the crown prince) or tributaries approaching the king and, in a limited number, scenes of royal building, small scale hunting and banqueting.<sup>79</sup> The non-narrative reliefs showed winged bull colossi, the so-called “hero with lion”<sup>80</sup> and the winged protective figures with cone and bucket, apparently omitting the stylized tree. The palace was inaugurated in 706 BC, only one year before Sargon’s death. Several inscriptions with the king’s annals were composed for display in the palace, either on the wall slabs,<sup>81</sup> on thresholds<sup>82</sup> or colossi;<sup>83</sup> they celebrated the building of the whole new city and of the palace as part of it (actually, at times, more palaces are mentioned). Shorter texts in celebration of the city and all its buildings including the palace-complex (containing also a *bīt-hilani*, resembling Hittite palaces) were inscribed on small tablets (of bronze and precious metals) buried at the foundations of the palace in Dur-šarrukīn.<sup>84</sup> In the lower part of the city, he

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the association with Ashurnasirpal’s image, by then a great king of the past, was used as a mechanism by which Sargon’s legitimacy problems would have been attenuated. Alternatively or complementary, grandiose actions of construction, the mark of great kings, were emphasized, while the succession line was silenced in Sargon’s inscriptions. His epical constructions would have stood as tokens of the power he wielded and good kingship. They would have confirmed in the eyes of the contemporaries his righteousness to be the occupant of the throne, the “true king”, who acted with the full support of the gods.

<sup>77</sup> Russell, 1999: 221.

<sup>78</sup> See plan of Sargon II’s palace in Kertai, 2012: Pl. 11. The palace comprised the throne room suite, two very large double sided suites, several reception/residential suites and a dual core suite, a significant number of courts and adjacent spaces.

<sup>79</sup> Albenda, 1986.

<sup>80</sup> Sargon II introduced the arrangement of two human-headed winged bull colossi flanking a large human figure holding a small scale lion. It was displayed only on the main façades of the palace (the throne room façade and that of the west wing, a monumental double sided suite). For the throne room façade, the figure with lion was a larger type, with six curls, a model which is found ever since the third millennium on various objects (especially seals), while the second type, ascribed to the façade of the western suite, is of smaller size and has a typical Assyrian hairdo and beard, similar to the protective figures positioned at doorways. See Albenda, 1986: 102.

<sup>81</sup> Fuchs, 1993: 82-188, 313-342 (Rooms II, V, and XIII) and annalistic summary-like texts at pp. 75-81, 307-312 (Room XIV) and pp. 189-248, 343-355 (Rooms IV, VII, VIII, and X).

<sup>82</sup> Fuchs, 1993: 249-275, 356-363.

<sup>83</sup> Fuchs, 1993: 60-74, 303-306.

<sup>84</sup> Fuchs, 1993: 45-53, 296-300.

constructed an arsenal palace (Palace F), without narrative reliefs of his exploits. City and palaces were largely similar to Ashurnasirpal II's at Kalhu. Sargon II also worked on Ashurnasirpal's palace at Kalhu and celebrated this in an inscription displayed at the site, which also mentions he had deposited there much booty and tribute.<sup>85</sup> Sargon II died on the battlefield in Cilicia (Anatolia) and his body was never recovered and buried, a critical situation signifying that the king lost the divine support for whatever sins he had committed.<sup>86</sup> In such conditions, the Northwest Palace at Dur-šarrukin did not establish itself as main royal residence for the subsequent kings; it was abandoned together with the whole city soon after Sargon's demise, never to regain its importance again.<sup>87</sup>

**Sennacherib** (704-681 BC), son and successor of Sargon II, constructed his own palace away from his father's creation at Dur-šarrukin, whose building he must have assisted throughout the whole process, him having been represented on its reliefs as crown prince. Sennacherib chose to build his own palace on the larger citadel of Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik), an ancient city of Assyria with several important palaces and temples, which he turned into the capital of his realm.<sup>88</sup> According to its location on the Kuyunjik mound, the archaeologists named it the Southwest Palace.<sup>89</sup> It was decorated with reliefs glorifying Sennacherib's military victories and construction projects giving up on many of previous subjects such as royal hunt, tributary and official processions, banquet, stylized tree and "hero

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<sup>85</sup> Luckenbill, 1927: 71-73 (136-138).

<sup>86</sup> The literary composition "Sin of Sargon" explicitly equates Sargon II's death on the battlefield and his lack of interment with divine abandonment, with serious consequences also on his successor Sennacherib. It was written probably during Esarhaddon and conceived as Sennacherib's recounting and giving advice to his heir. Although always exercising exemplary his duties to the gods, Sennacherib encountered hard times; after consulting the oracles, the source of misfortune was revealed to be his father's sins which led to his demise. Sargon II, the text says, had "esteemed the gods of Assyria too much, placing them above the gods of Babylonia". Livingstone, 1989: 77-79 (17-20). See discussions on the possible ideological reasons behind the commissioning of this composition in Weaver, 2004.

<sup>87</sup> See Frahm, 1999 for a discussion of the impact Sargon's death may have had on Sennacherib, his heir, which may have determined his immediate abandoning of Dur-šarrukin.

<sup>88</sup> Nineveh had been the main administrative center and residence of the Assyrian king before Ashurnasirpal II moved it to Kalhu. For a full history of Nineveh, see Reade, 2000.

<sup>89</sup> See plan of the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib in Kertai, 2015: Pl. 17. The monumental palace contained the throne room suite, five dual core suites (two of them very large), a double sided suite, a reception/residential suite, several courts and terraces and adjacent spaces.

with lion”.<sup>90</sup> The construction started shortly after his father’s death, in 702 BC, and undertook subsequent phases of expansion until it reached its monumental proportions, being finished around 691 BC.<sup>91</sup> He named the new royal edifice the “Palace without Rival” (its name was rendered in Sumerian and Akkadian) and its monumentality exceeded indeed any previous or later royal edifice. The massive building project was recorded in many inscriptions, together with the king’s military victories. Annalistic texts were written for display on colossi throughout the palace. Palace building accounts were written also on prisms and cylinders buried in the palace foundations, the foundation of the city wall at Nineveh, and at Assur.<sup>92</sup> After or shortly before the completion of the main palace, he worked on the arsenal palace on the smaller Nebi Yunus mound at Nineveh; this one was decorated only with protective figures and columns.<sup>93</sup> Sennacherib also undertook building projects on parts of the Old Palace at Assur and celebrated it in both short and lengthier annalistic inscriptions.<sup>94</sup> The king fell victim to a murderous plot set out by one of his elder sons (or more), who aspired to the throne in spite of his father’s decision of appointing a younger son, in the person of Esarhaddon.

**Esarhaddon** (680-669 BC) had to fight for the throne against rival brothers after the murder of his father. He seems to have had inaugurated several new practices concerning the palace building projects and their decoration. A first such peculiarity occurred when he, as crown prince, built a palace for himself at Nineveh and officially commemorated it in his own inscription (on a buried clay cylinder).<sup>95</sup> Apparently, as far as the inscription tells, no reliefs with his exploits as crown prince decorated the walls. However, building projects and their celebration in inscriptions was a royal prerogative. The crown prince doing this knows no precedent in the recorded sources and it might have been particularly linked to the

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<sup>90</sup> Russell, 1991.

<sup>91</sup> Russell, 1991: 93 and RINAP 3/1: 17.

<sup>92</sup> RINAP 3/1: 29-30. See, for example, Text 2 (lines 34-63) and Text 22 (lines vi 36-38).

<sup>93</sup> Kertai, 2013: 19.

<sup>94</sup> See RINAP 3/2: 260 (Text 178) for Sennacherib’s short inscription on a stone block and 233-235 (Text 164) for a longer annalistic text on prism.

<sup>95</sup> According to the inscription, he built a “small palace for his princely residence” (É. GAL.TUR. RA *ana mušab ru-[bu-ti-ia...]*); RINAP 4:62 (Text 14, line 4). The palace is not known archaeologically. Although commissioning building accounts was a royal prerogative, Esarhaddon’s palace building account as crown prince is more modest than a king’s: the palace is said to be a small edifice and the inscription does not glorify any special achievements of the prince.

historical context of Esarhaddon's selection as heir by Sennacherib. Esarhaddon may have not been the first choice for succession.<sup>96</sup> An elder brother, Assur-nadin-šumi, was appointed on the Babylonian throne earlier in Sennacherib's reign, an act which may indicate he was also the heir designate. Assur-nadin-šumi, however, was captured and perhaps murdered at the hands of an Elamite-Babylonian plot (in 693 BC, when Sennacherib was battling in Elamite territory). As Esarhaddon apparently was not the eldest brother in line (according to his own inscriptions),<sup>97</sup> others among Sennacherib's sons aspired to the position. For unknown reasons, however, Esarhaddon was appointed crown prince and this practice met resistance, later to materialize in Sennacherib's murder by his son(s).<sup>98</sup> A whole set of practices were newly introduced to institutionalize Sennacherib's choice. One was the loyalty oaths sworn by Sennacherib's subjects to his appointee Esarhaddon<sup>99</sup> and another was staging an official entering of the prince in the *bīt redûti* (the "Succession House"), mentioned now for the first time in inscriptions. Entering the *bīt redûti* meant that the prince would be associated to the royal affairs; it must have been as part of his association to kingship that Esarhaddon built his (small) princely palace and had his official inscription written for the event (although keeping with the proportions of his position in relationship to the king's).

Another peculiarity connected to Esarhaddon's reign and palace building projects is connected to the the king's mother, Naqia/ Zakutu.<sup>100</sup> The sources record the single case when another family member built a palace for the king: Naqia left a building inscription (on buried cylinders), composed in similar fashion as a royal inscription proper, but of more

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<sup>96</sup> For a discussion on Esarhaddon's ascension to the throne, see Porter, 1993 (Chapter 2).

<sup>97</sup> His name, *Assur-ahu-iddina*, means "The god Assur has given a brother" and may already be an indication that he was a younger son. RINAP 4: 2. Esarhaddon refers to himself in the inscriptions commissioned for the commemoration of the armory in Nineveh as "I am my older brothers' youngest brother"; RINAP 4: 11 (Nin. A, lines 7-8).

<sup>98</sup> According to S. Parpola, one of Sennacherib's elder sons, Arda-Mulissi, apparently benefitting from the support of certain circles at the court, may have plotted and carried out the murder of his father, but failed to occupy the throne. See Parpola, 1980, against the previous generally accepted view that Esarhaddon himself and his mother Naqia may have been involved in Sennacherib's murder, given that they were the ones who in the end benefitted from it.

<sup>99</sup> A draft of such an oath of Sennacherib was found at Assur. See Tadmor, 1984:38 and Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 18 (3).

<sup>100</sup> For a study on the political role Naqia/ Zakutu may have played at the Assyrian court of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, see Melville, 1999.

modest grandeur, commemorating the palace building project.<sup>101</sup> However, the text mentions that the construction was carried out with resources provided by her son, the king, with her lordly share of war prisoners.<sup>102</sup> It has been argued that the main occupant of Naqia's palace at Nineveh was in fact Naqia herself, while the palace building was part of a deliberate policy of the king to enhance and emphasize the mother queen's status, necessary for his political moves in a difficult royal environment.<sup>103</sup> Thirdly, Esarhaddon seems to have broken the norm of not altering the reliefs of past kings and their palaces. Later in his reign, he started building a palace at Kalhu, and in this endeavor he attempted to use the relief slabs of Tiglath-pileser III.<sup>104</sup> However, this project was never finished. Fourthly, the arsenal palace at Nineveh (see **Pl. 1**) was reconstructed and celebrated in a series of annalistic inscriptions (on buried prisms), but said to have been decorated with reliefs of Esarhaddon's military victories.<sup>105</sup> If so, it would be the only armory to bear reliefs with a king's achievements. Building accounts of the armory were dated to 676 BC and 673/ 672 BC and they were identical, but for one major difference. The later text contains an autobiographical prologue recording Esarhaddon's accession to the throne and was composed one year before his succession arrangements were made public through loyalty oaths (as his father did before).<sup>106</sup> The autobiographical prologue of an apologetic nature was in itself a new introduction in the

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<sup>101</sup> RINAP 4: 315-318 (2003, 2004). The palace is not known archaeologically, although its location is indicated in the inscription – behind the Sin-Šamaš temple, in the northern side of the Kuyunjik citadel. The palace was thus built on the citadel overlooking the city, just like a real royal residence.

<sup>102</sup> “*ša a-na eš-qi EN-ú-ti-ia*” RINAP 4: 316 (Text 2003, lines ii 9-10).

<sup>103</sup> Melville, 1999: 38-42. At the time he became king, Esarhaddon may have not been accepted by all elite parties, which may have still had as favorite for the throne one or another brother of Esarhaddon. The king's autobiographical inscriptions mention him having defeated his brothers, but not capturing them, as they made their way out of the country. RINAP 4: 13-14 (Text 1/ Nin A, lines i 74-86).

<sup>104</sup> Apparently, he resided for a while in Kalhu. The context remains unknown, but a query to the god Šamaš may suggest a tensed situation. The god is consulted whether the king should leave the city of Kalah or not and whether there would be a rebellion against him on the way. See query 148 in Starr, 1990: 157.

<sup>105</sup> See RINAP 4: 27-35 Nin B (Text 2) and 9-26 Nin A (Text 1, lines vi 28-29). However, not too much archaeological evidence from his reign is available and this textual statement about the reliefs cannot be verified. The texts refer to the armory as the king's royal residence and having been built for his royal leisure. Other palaces he worked on are also called his royal residence, without meaning they were his main royal residence and without them carrying reliefs with his exploits. See, for example, inscription Assur E, commemorating his work on the palace in Assur, in RINAP 4: 141-142 (64).

<sup>106</sup> See the “succession treaty” of Esarhaddon in Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 28-58 (6).

royal rhetoric.<sup>107</sup> 672 BC was the year Esarhaddon appointed Ashurbanipal as his successor on the Assyrian throne and Šamaš-šumu-ukin on the throne of Babylon.<sup>108</sup> The decision may have been prompted also by the death of his wife one year earlier (mentioned by the Babylonian chronicles).<sup>109</sup> In this context, a newly introduced artifice in the text with the king's apology was put in connection with a building project which was also particular by having reliefs with the king's exploits (at least as far as the inscription goes). And they both appear in close connection with the king's arrangements of succession. The event was indeed important, given the troubled background he himself had to struggle with when Sennacherib was murdered and his right to rule was contested by other brothers and parties. All the more, the manner in which he established the succession was also a novelty – a younger son to rule over Assyria: Ashurbanipal, and an elder son to rule over Babylon for the Assyrian interest: Šamaš-šumu-ukin.<sup>110</sup> Esarhaddon worked on the Old Palace in Assur as well. There he kept with the tradition and did not introduce any reliefs with his exploits. However, the inscription buried at the site mentions his naming Ashurbanipal as heir to the Assyrian throne, suggesting this construction program too was undertaken in the same series of activities in connection to the official statement of his succession arrangements.<sup>111</sup> Another palatial building project Esarhaddon undertook as king and which does not appear in the recordings of his predecessors was the work on the *bīt redūti* at Nineveh, for which he claims to have built an annex.<sup>112</sup> The project however is known only from a brick inscription stemming from Nineveh, without any context. While the work may still be put in connection to the

<sup>107</sup> See a discussion on Esarhaddon's apologetic text (Nin A) in Tadmor, 1984: 38.

<sup>108</sup> Babylonia came to be under Assyrian rule ever since the 8<sup>th</sup> century with Tiglath-pileser III, but always rebelling and attempting to throw off the Assyrian dominance. The situation became very tensed with Sennacherib, who sought better control over Babylonia by putting his son on the Babylonian throne (against the Chaldean Merodach-baladan II), who was killed. At all times Elam supported Babylonian uprisings for keeping the Assyrians at bay. Esarhaddon took direct control over Babylon and tried a different policy through extensive building programs, presenting himself to the Babylonians as a builder-king, much in a Babylonian fashion. As future political arrangements he devised that one son would rule Assyria and another Babylonia (under Assyrian dominance). For a Babylonian history, see Frame, 1992.

<sup>109</sup> Tadmor, 1984: 43. See the entries in the Babylonian chronicles in Grayson, 1975: 85 (22); 127 (23).

<sup>110</sup> The peculiarity of the situation is suggested by a letter of an official to Esarhaddon (Adad-šumu-usur), written in 672 BC, stating that the king had done what was not done in heavens. Šamaš-šumu-ukin is explicitly called the eldest son of the king. See Parpola, 2007, Vol. 1: 102-104 (129) for the text and Vol. 2: 115-119 for discussion. See also a discussion on the unsettled manner of succession in Assyria in Porter, 1993: Chapter 2.

<sup>111</sup> RINAP 4: 141-142 (64).

<sup>112</sup> RINAP 4: 69-70 (23, lines 2-3).

succession issue, given the association of the *bīt redûti* with the prince designate, the effort apparently was not celebrated in lengthy inscriptions. Apart from these unusual practices, in 676 BC and 672 BC – parallel thus with the work on the arsenal of Nineveh – Esarhaddon also undertook building projects in the city of and on the arsenal at Kalhu and had lengthy inscriptions celebrating these projects on foundation prisms and cylinders.<sup>113</sup> Although not bearing reliefs with the exploits of the king, the arsenal in Kalhu bore glazed bricks depicting him. They may have shown the king facing courtiers, procession of courtiers returning from hunt, the king deposing a lion or related scenes (hunt from the royal chariot).<sup>114</sup> The inscriptions don't mention anything about these paintings though. Interestingly, a query to the god Šamaš was written in 672 from the arsenal palace at Kalhu and it concerned an illness (unknown) of Esarhaddon.<sup>115</sup> Still in Kalhu and in the same year 672 BC, the year when he appointed Ashurbanipal as his successor on the Assyrian throne, Esarhaddon constructed a palace for the latter as crown prince.<sup>116</sup> The inscription written on foundation cylinders recording a summary of Esarhaddon's temple building and military accomplishments mentions it was written both in the king's and Ashurbanipal's name. This construction was thus part of the official introduction of Ashurbanipal in the royal affairs. In the same stream of thought, Esarhaddon built yet another palace for Ashurbanipal as crown prince, this time at Tarbisu (modern Sherif Khan), close to Nineveh. This project too required the commissioning of a lengthy inscription with a summary of the king's successes and was dated to 672 BC.<sup>117</sup> It too was written in both the name of the king and Ashurbanipal's as crown prince. More so, the dating part of the inscription mentions explicitly that it was written in the year the treaty concerning Ashurbanipal (for succession) was done, thus creating a direct connection between the events. The palace did not contain any narrative reliefs.

As it looks, Esarhaddon encountered the need or simply decided for having a royal edifice to bear his accomplishments, like his father and his grandfather before. Because he did not move the capital away from Nineveh, which was still dominated by the grandeur of the “Palace without Rival” of Sennacherib, the solution he found was to work on and decorate

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<sup>113</sup> RINAP 4: 153-156 (77) and 157-158 (78).

<sup>114</sup> Reade, 1979 (d): 95.

<sup>115</sup> Query 183 in Starr, 1990: 188.

<sup>116</sup> RINAP 4: 160-162 (79).

<sup>117</sup> RINAP 4: 174-177 (93) written on a barrel cylinder was found in Assur, in secondary context and nothing is known of its original provenance. Other short inscriptions were found on stone slabs at the site. See RINAP 4: 177-178 (94, 95).

the arsenal palace on the second, smaller mound of the capital, Nebi Yunus. The armory's state of dilapidation claimed by the building account is questionable, since Sennacherib too had reconditioned it before (or so he claimed). Unfortunately, Esarhaddon's claims cannot be verified, as no palatial reliefs of his have been unearthed thus far. In Nineveh they haven't been excavated, although the walls of a chamber on the Nebi Yunus mound were found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with inscriptions bearing his name and titles, but with the rest of the slabs left blank. Excavations conducted in the 1990's unearthed entrances adorned with bull colossi (leading probably to a throne-room); large stone slabs were also found, but they were undecorated.<sup>118</sup> This suggests that it probably was never finished. As a rule, the royal rhetoric of palace building inscriptions always mentions the palace as having been completely finished and inaugurated, even when such commemorative inscriptions are emitted throughout a long number of years recording different stages of the construction.<sup>119</sup> The inscriptions thus, especially the earlier ones, may have simply stated a desideratum. Even if the slabs of the armory in Nineveh were never carved with reliefs of Esarhaddon's military affairs, the fact remains that there was an intention to do so. At a later stage during the work on it (in 672 BC), the armory was directly connected to Esarhaddon's official presentation of his succession arrangements. The palace' reliefs and building account celebrated his deeds, the latter adding an apology with Esarhaddon's own ascension to the throne. The earlier palatial constructions related to him (as crown prince or of queen Naqia) worked for strengthening his position as heir and later as king, while all the other palatial projects seem to have been concerned with enabling a smooth succession for his heirs and official introduction of his unprecedented or refutable succession arrangement. This issue seems to have been a crucial one. It may have not been agreed by all parties, and Esarhaddon may have had his opponents: the entry for the year 670 BC of the Babylonian chronicles record that "the king put his numerous officers to the sword in Assyria".<sup>120</sup> The next year, Esarhaddon died, falling ill during a march against rebellious Egypt, most likely without finishing his building projects. Nothing is known about how such a death was received, given that he died during a military march, but of illness. Usually, when recounting about the demise of some enemy king or official at the strike of an illness, this is shaped in the rhetoric of the royal inscriptions as an act of the great Assyrian gods who decided the downfall of the

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<sup>118</sup> Russell, 1999: 145.

<sup>119</sup> The most evident case is that of Sennacherib's inscriptions celebrating the construction of the Palace without Rival from 702 BC to 691 BC, always stating the palace was completely finished.

<sup>120</sup> Grayson, 1975: 86 (29), 127 (27).



respective person.<sup>121</sup> As for the military context, the already mentioned composition “Sin of Sargon”, written most likely during Esarhaddon’s reign, suggests the negative impact this may have had in the evaluation of the ruler’s kingship and priesthood (with the difference that Esarhaddon did not actually die in battle).

### 2.1.2. Ashurbanipal as palace builder

**Ashurbanipal (668-627 BC)**<sup>122</sup> succeeded to the throne of Assyria as his father wished, after the latter’s death. Although there is no direct indication of hostility to this, one peculiar fact is that his grandmother, queen Naqia, reiterated the procedure of loyalty oaths sworn to Ashurbanipal by all his brothers, including Šamaš-šumu-ukin, and all his magnates and entourage.<sup>123</sup> The situation may have had its potential of tension. From surviving queries to the god Šamaš (apparently a procedure representative only for Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal), there seems to have been constant fear of rebellion on the part of Esarhaddon, both from inside the palace (relatives and officials) and foreigners.<sup>124</sup> Rebellions against the crown prince Ashurbanipal were seriously taken into account.<sup>125</sup> In Esarhaddon’s loyalty oath texts, Šamaš-šumu-ukin is always called Ashurbanipal’s “equal brother”.<sup>126</sup> More so, in a

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<sup>121</sup> See, for example, Ashurbanipal’s Edition B of the annals concerning the end of Elam 2 campaign against Urtaki and his allies. Nabû-šumu-ereš, the governor of Nippur, who sinned against the oaths with Assyria, was struck by the god Assur with dropsy and died the same year. Borger, 1996: 223 (B§29, IV 62-63).

<sup>122</sup> His name, *Assur-bani-apli*, means “The god Ashur is the creator of the heir”, suggesting rather a throne name related to his appointment as crown prince. See Radner, 1998: 159 (*Assur-bani-apli*).

<sup>123</sup> See text in Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 62-64 (8). Naqia’s treaty seems to address Ashurbanipal’s brothers and it enumerates Šamaš-šumu-ukin first, followed by another brother referred also by name, Šamaš-metu-uballit. While the first is called crown prince of the *bīt redūti* and equal brother of Ashurbanipal in several documents, nothing is known about the other; it may be that the reference by name and not a general “rest of the brothers” suggests a certain importance in the royal circles.

<sup>124</sup> Esarhaddon apparently consulted the god even for leaving the city of Kalhu, regarding the possibility of a rebellion either of the royal family members, or foreigners. See query 148 in Starr, 1990: 157.

<sup>125</sup> See especially queries 142 and 143 in Starr, 1990: 152-154. Fear of rebellion transpires also from queries regarding the appointment of officials in various positions. The god was asked if one official or another would start a rebellion against Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal as crown prince designate. In this sense see, for example, query 156 in Starr, 1990: 167-169. The latter is said to have been performed in the “new palace” of an unknown city.

<sup>126</sup> Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 32 (§7).

passage, reference is made to Ashurbanipal being actually a younger brother,<sup>127</sup> a fact which appears to be sustained by the already mentioned letter from a scholar to Esarhaddon, emphasizing the peculiarity of the king's choice among sons for succession.<sup>128</sup> The letter suggests positive reception of the arrangement by the scholar himself. It may also suggest further effects of Esarhaddon's arrangement; the letter mentions that the Elamite delegates, who apparently had previously behaved in a reprehensible manner, got anxious and left Assyria, while the Assyrians felt relieved. This may all be part of flattering rhetoric on the part of the scholar who wrote the letter to the king, but the fact remains that the succession arrangements would have had an impact on Assyria's international affairs and an Elamite implication was of concern. The author of the letter also raises the issue of appeasement of the other many sons of Esarhaddon, whose needs was recommended be taken care of as well. More so, a query of Esarhaddon to the sun-god Šamaš (dating probably to 677 BC) suggests that, apart from Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin, other possibilities for succession were considered as well. The god was consulted if another of Esarhaddon's sons, Sin-nadin-apli, should enter the *bīt redûti*.<sup>129</sup> The result is not mentioned, but it's known that he was indeed the crown prince for a while.<sup>130</sup> Last, but not least, as already mentioned, two years before Ashurbanipal ascended on the throne (670 BC), Esarhaddon had to deal with unsubmissive officials of his, as reported by the Babylonian chronicles.<sup>131</sup>

Ashurbanipal too initiated peculiar practices concerning palace reliefs and palace building. Early in his reign, one of his first annalistic editions (666 BC or 665/4 BC) ascribed to buried prisms records his work on a palace (one of the two editions E of the annals). It may have been the *bīt redûti*, if the reconstruction of the damaged text is correct.<sup>132</sup> What is peculiar is that the building inscription contains an autobiographical prologue, recounting Ashurbanipal's ascension to the throne.<sup>133</sup> His learning skills, literacy and training convinced

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<sup>127</sup> Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 31 (lines 55-56).

<sup>128</sup> Parpola, 2007, Vol. 1: 103-105.

<sup>129</sup> Starr, 1990: 160-161 (149).

<sup>130</sup> *Sin-nadin-apli* means "Sin has given the heir", suggesting that Ashurbanipal was not the first choice for heir apparent. It is not known what triggered the change, but untimely death may be an answer. Radner, 1998: 161.

<sup>131</sup> Grayson, 1975: 86 (29), 127 (27).

<sup>132</sup> Borger, 1996: 183-184, 251 (19, lines 9-15). According to Borger's reconstruction, it may have been work on the *bīt redûti*: "*e-nu-ma é ʾuṣṭi-šu-a-tu...*" ("when that succession house...").

<sup>133</sup> Apparently the same prologue was used for a very similar inscription (a second edition E), but which celebrated the building of a wall. Borger, 1996: 183, 251 (18, line 7).

Esarhaddon to involve him in the state affairs and later, upon consulting the oracles, to appoint him heir of the Assyrian throne. Following came Ashurbanipal's entering the *bīt redûti* and the imposition of loyalty oaths. Thus, early in his reign, with the occasion of a palatial work, an emphasis was put on Ashurbanipal's legitimacy to be the occupant of the throne. A motive introduced earlier by his father for succession arrangements was used by Ashurbanipal to strengthen his position on the throne.<sup>134</sup> If indeed the *bīt redûti* was involved, the need for further work on it so early would raise some question marks, considering that Esarhaddon had already undertaken work on it (as attested by a brick inscription). Sometime later, in 649 BC, another palatial construction is celebrated (Edition B); curiously, the work was conducted on the arsenal of Nineveh, which his father Esarhaddon claims to have rebuilt and decorated with reliefs displaying his military achievements (Nin B and Nin A texts of 676 BC and 672 BC). Ashurbanipal's text, however, mentions that Sennacherib had built it and Ashurbanipal's inscriptions were buried together with his grandfather's; there is no mention of Esarhaddon whatsoever.<sup>135</sup> In 647 BC another palatial construction was recorded in an annalistic inscription (Edition C), but the fragmentary state of the building section does not provide any further details.<sup>136</sup> The building project and the commissioning of the inscription came shortly after the defeat of Ashurbanipal's rebellious brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his death, which are recorded in the annalistic text. The prologue no longer contains any apology concerning his accession on the throne.

Like his predecessors, Ashurbanipal was determined to have his exploits glorified in palatial reliefs; this need occurred only later in his reign, much like in Esarhaddon's case. Nineveh remained his capital and was still dominated by the Palace without Rival. While work on some palaces did take place, Ashurbanipal commissioned his reliefs to be displayed in Sennacherib's Palace without Rival. At least one room was decorated with narrative reliefs rendering one of his military victories (Room 33). The room functioned as an entrance hall connecting a lateral terrace to a monumental suite of the palace (one room of the same suite also sheltered much of Ashurbanipal's correspondence and part of his library). Epigraphs

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<sup>134</sup> This same idea is contained by Text L<sub>4</sub> written in 668 BC, one of the earliest inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. It was occasioned by the ceremonial of his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin occupying the throne of Babylon and fulfilling the succession arrangements of Esarhaddon.

<sup>135</sup> Borger, 1996: 252 (B§59, 61).

<sup>136</sup> [e]-[nu-ma é-ga]l ("when the palace..."). Borger, 1996: 164 (C§86, X 107).

inserted in the narrative reliefs secure their identification as Ashurbanipal's. Other spaces of the palace may have also been used by him, but this is less certain.<sup>137</sup> The visual narrative was worked on previous blank stone slabs of Sennacherib. This was the first time a king introduced his own reliefs in a palace sheltering those glorifying a predecessor. Esarhaddon had started a precedent when attempting to use Tiglath-pileser III's slabs at Kalhu and Ashurbanipal put it into practice. This was done sometime after 653 BC, the date of the military campaign, thus after his 15<sup>th</sup> year of reign. His work on the Palace without Rival was not recorded in any inscription, at least not as far as the surviving evidence is concerned. Later on, around his 20<sup>th</sup> year of reign, Ashurbanipal claims to have torn down completely the *bīt redûti* on the Kuyunjik mound and to have built a new palace on its place. This is the modernly called North Palace, according to its location on the citadel, and it was lavishly decorated with reliefs celebrating Ashurbanipal's exploits. It was positioned at close distance from Sennacherib's Palace without Rival. For this undertaking Ashurbanipal commissioned two lengthy annalistic inscriptions written on a number of prisms walled up or buried in the foundations of the palace – Editions F and A of his annals dated to 645 BC and 643 BC. Both of them contain an apologetic prologue recounting Ashurbanipal's accession to the throne. The apologetic motive of his earliest inscriptions is thus reintroduced, but some details are quite different.<sup>138</sup> Building project and inscription are similar to Esarhaddon's precedent concerning the armory at Nineveh. If in Esarhaddon's case the building project and the inscription commemorating it (Nin A from 762 BC) came shortly after and in close connection to his succession arrangements and may have functioned in the process of official acknowledgement of this arrangement, no such thing is known for Ashurbanipal, neither around this time of his reign, nor later (the latter years of his reign are completely unknown due to a lack of sources). If indeed the succession issue was at stake,<sup>139</sup> this was not preserved by the sources. While the simple fact that the *bīt redûti* – that is, “succession house” – was worked on may suggest succession was taken into consideration, a novel issue still appears – the reconstructed *bīt redûti* was adorned with reliefs of Ashurbanipal's accomplishments and said to be his royal residence.

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<sup>137</sup> Reade, 1979 (d): 109.

<sup>138</sup> Further discussion on this aspect is provided in the next chapter.

<sup>139</sup> On the model of Esarhaddon's text Nin A, which occurred when the king established his succession, Tadmor suggests that the same was the case for Ashurbanipal's annalistic Editions F and A. All the more since the king would have been in his 50's by the time Editions F and A were commissioned. Tadmor, 1984: 52.

Ashurbanipal's succession arrangements are not preserved. The situation after his death, however, was far from settled and smooth –the few surviving evidence suggests disputes for the throne.<sup>140</sup> His son Assur-etil-ilani occupied it first, but not without contestation. Apparently, a high official of his and former supporter seized briefly the throne for himself. In the end the throne was occupied by another of Ashurbanipal's sons – Sin-šar-iškun. It seems that the period down to 612 BC when Nineveh was destroyed was one of tensions and power struggles. The surviving evidence shows that Sin-šar-iškun had some control in Babylon for a while. But soon Assyria would be reduced only to the territories around its great cities. No reliefs of Assur-etil-ilani are known. His brother, though, seems to have inserted his triumphs in certain areas of Sennacherib's palace, which he also claims to have restored (on the walls of the central court 19 and on the corridor 28).<sup>141</sup> The old slabs were either chiseled away or turned around to make space for the new renditions. No interventions seem to have been made on the unearthed parts of the North Palace.

## **2.2. Archaeological context of the North Palace**

The remains of Ashurbanipal's palace were unearthed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Hormuzd Rassam, the former assistant of British explorer A. H. Layard, and geologist William Kenett Loftus. Artist William Boucher joined and registered in drawing the reliefs and the plan of the unearthed surface of the palace. Excavations on the North Palace were conducted until R.C. Thompson's diggings in 1905, with campaigns undertaken by G. Smith, H. Rassam again, and L. W. King in between.<sup>142</sup> The available archaeological knowledge is largely based on the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century accounts of its discoverers, who at the time were interested in recovering better preserved reliefs and cuneiform tablets; thus, many aspects from the time of the discovery were completely ignored and never registered. No new, modern excavations took place at the North Palace.

Ashurbanipal's palace was built on the North side of the Kuyunjik mound, the larger citadel of Nineveh, receiving for this reason the name of the "North Palace" from its discoverers. The edifice was part of a whole complex of buildings on the Kuyunjik citadel

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<sup>140</sup> See a historical sketch of the period in Kuhrt, 1995: Chapter 9e.

<sup>141</sup> The scenes are of a different type than Ashurbanipal's. Reade, 1979 (d): 109-110.

<sup>142</sup> See the history of the excavations in Rassam, 1897, a summary in Barnett, 1976, and a table with all excavation work conducted in Nineveh, including the North Palace, in Reade, 2000: 398-394.

(see **Pl. 2**): its Southwest corner was in the immediate vicinity of the temple E-zi-da of Nabû, beyond which stood the temple E-maš-maš of the goddess Ištar of Nineveh, the tutelary deity of the city; on the opposite side of the citadel was Sennacherib's "Palace without Rival".<sup>143</sup> Several other buildings were located on the Kuyunjik mound, as suggested by written documents; queen Naqia's building inscription, for example, mentions a temple for Sin and Shamash, probably to be located close to the Ishtar temple, behind which she claims to have built the palace for her son, king Esarhaddon. Ashurbanipal's North Palace must have been connected in one way or another with all of these buildings on the citadel. In the inscription celebrating the construction of the palace, Ashurbanipal mentions that it was built with the other existing edifices in mind, as to not upset the gods by raising the level of the palace' terrace and dwarfing the sanctuaries.<sup>144</sup> The king's text collection, the so-called "library of Ashurbanipal", was recovered from various places. Some tablets were found stored in Room C of the North Palace (although probably only secondarily stored there) and others in the Southwest corner of the palace, very close to the Nabû temple, while other tablets came from the temple proper and from Sennacherib's palace (Room 41). Tablets of his collection may have also been found in the Ishtar temple.<sup>145</sup> Colophons on some tablets, bearing the signature (name and title) of Ashurbanipal refer to two provenances: the *ekallum* ("palace") of Ashurbanipal and the temple of Nabû, and they were commissioned for different purposes: the personal use of the king (comprised literary compositions, divination and protection texts), or texts dedicated to the god Nabû for the life of Ashurbanipal.<sup>146</sup> The relationship between the Palace without Rival and the North Palace on the citadel remains unknown, as no text describes how Ashurbanipal ascribed his activities to one or the other.

The two inscriptions celebrating the construction project (Editions F and A) begin with the mention of the *bīt redûti* in the prologue and come back to it in the ending section reserved for the building account. In the prologue the *bīt redûti* stands for a rather abstract space of manifestation of kingship. Ashurbanipal is introduced as the eldest son of the *bīt redûti*; the "succession house" is an artful place and the link/ center of kingship (*markas*

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<sup>143</sup> For a full presentation of Nineveh, see Reade, 2000: 388-433; for buildings which may have been located on the Kuyunjik citadel of Nineveh, see p. 407-409.

<sup>144</sup> Only Edition A contains this information, the latest of the two editions of the annals written in connection to the North Palace (643 BC). See Borger, 1996: 73 (A§87, X 78-80).

<sup>145</sup> Reade, 1986.

<sup>146</sup> A full discussion on Ashurbanipal's collection of texts is provided by Lieberman, 1990.

lugal-*u-ti*), where his grandfather Sennacherib exercised princship and kingship, and where his father Esarhaddon was born and grew up, practiced the lordship of Assyria, controlled all the princes, extended the family and gathered relatives and family. Succeeding them, Ashurbanipal too entered the *bīt redûti* to receive his education in scribal practices and military training.<sup>147</sup> In the building account section, the *bīt redûti* is more of a physical establishment. It is a building proper, referred to as “the counterpart/ annex of the palace in Nineveh” (*è uš-ti te-né-e é-gal ša qereb Ninua*).<sup>148</sup> According to the building inscriptions, the old building was renovated initially by Sennacherib and used as his royal seat; it then became old and its walls started to crumble. The ruins of the old structure were torn down completely, in order to make room for a royal dwelling of larger size. The choice of the place was explained through a favorable succession of events: Ashurbanipal having safely grown up in that *bīt redûti*; his princship having functioned under the protection of the gods at all times; his swift ascension to the throne of his predecessors; and a successful sovereignty proven by the conquest of his foes. All these augury signs had proven that the place was most suited for his royal edifice “(because) that abode provides safety for its lords, (and it is) one for whom the gods have decreed a favorable fate”.<sup>149</sup> In the concluding part of the text, when addressing the posterity, Ashurbanipal refers to his inscriptions which were to be buried at the foundation of the palace, together with those of his father and his grandfather. As early as the first inscription celebrating the building of the North Palace in 645 BC (Edition F of the annals) it is said that the palace was completely finished and inaugurated. Precious wood from Lebanon and bronze adornments were used in its construction. In the end it exceeded in size and artistry any previous work on it and it became Ashurbanipal’s royal seat. A park and certain architectural features like the *bit-hilani* (Hittite-inspired palatial architecture) were provided for the palace. The second inscription from 643 BC (Edition A of the annals) mentions in addition that goods from booty (from Elam) were used in the building process.

All these, however, are part of the usual formula of the royal rhetoric of palatial building projects. In the palatial building accounts all palaces, regardless of their use (arsenals or others), are said to have been worked on for the king’s royal residence and leisure. They were either created anew where no king had built before or on the place of older ones, torn down to

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<sup>147</sup> Borger, 1996: 14 (A§1, I 2), 16 (A§3, I 23-34).

<sup>148</sup> Borger, 1996: 72 (A§87, X 51/ F§36, VI 22). “*Tenû*” is translated as “substitute/ replacement” when used with persons and “annex” in building contexts. CAD/ T: 344-5 (2, 3).

<sup>149</sup> Borger, 1996: 73, 256 (A§87, X 72-73).

allow space for a more grandiose construction. In all cases, the palace building rhetoric asserts to the *topos* of outdoing the predecessors. At the same time this formula puts the builder king in line with former and future kings. Furthermore, upon future work, his inscriptions would be found, read and reburied next to those of the successors.

In the meantime, archaeologically, the situation is not that clear. Some facts seem to suggest the building account did not cover the reality. Apart from Rassam's report that "while digging in chamber F in Assur-bani-pal's palace at Koyunjik, we came upon a large sewer below the floor, built partially of molded bricks, representing Assyrian mystic figures, which evidently belonged formerly to an ancient building",<sup>150</sup> there seems to be no recorded archaeological evidence in support of a building preceding the North Palace as described by Ashurbanipal in his inscriptions.<sup>151</sup> Room F, as will be later discussed, by analogy to similar chambers in other palaces, may have functioned as a bathroom, and the sewer remains found by Rassam may have been part of its facilities (however, no drain has been discovered). More so, Ashurbanipal's palace as crown prince, according to one of Esarhaddon's inscriptions, was at Tarbisu. Lastly, no foundation deposits with inscriptions of Sennacherib or Esarhaddon were reported found during the excavations at the North Palace.

On the other hand, according to a brick inscription, Esarhaddon did build an annex to the *bīt redûti* in Nineveh ("te-né-e é uš-ti qé-reb'šá' uru šá nina.ki),<sup>152</sup> suggesting that such a building existed. Ashurbanipal too refers to the old construction he tore down as an annex of the palace at Nineveh. During the Babylonian rebellion and the war against Šamaš-šumu-ukin (in 651 BC) a query to the god Šamaš was performed "[ina é]-uš-te" (*bīt redûte*, alternative spelling for *bīt redûti*, the "succession house").<sup>153</sup> The lack of archaeological evidence in support for Ashurbanipal's claims may be due to the state of research at the spot. Such being the state of affairs, we can neither dismiss Ashurbanipal's statements, nor take them for granted without precautions.

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<sup>150</sup> Rassam, 1897:222.

<sup>151</sup> D. Kertai, is of the opinion that the North Palace did not have a predecessor. See Kertai 2012: 22; 2015: 168-169.

<sup>152</sup> RINAP 4: 69-70 (23, lines 2-3).

<sup>153</sup> Query 283 in Starr, 1990: 266-267. The query is concerned if Šamaš-šumu-ukin would be captured by the Assyrian troops and met with a favorable replay from the god. When inscribed and preserved, the location where the query was performed is usually the "new palace". Such an expression appears also in some of Esarhaddon's queries. However, it is not known what edifice this referred to.



The work on the palace started probably shortly before the first inscription records it in 645 BC (edition F). In 643 BC work was still in progress because the second (and last known) inscription was written and buried in its walls. The date it was completed remains unknown. The phases of its building cannot be traced neither archaeologically, because no records of stratigraphy were made at the time of the excavations, nor based on building inscriptions commemorating it, because its only two known building accounts do not give details in this respect.<sup>154</sup> The latest events the reliefs display seem to go no further than 643 BC. But the North Palace has not been uncovered in its totality; in fact less than half of its surface is known and mapped and further reliefs may still be buried. Because the stone panels in some rooms were left blank and because other rooms which were decorated did not bear any epigraphs, it may be possible that the palace was not finished at the time of Ashurbanipal and was not completed after his death either. This however cannot be a certainty and some spaces may have been left blank on purpose because they served functions which would not expose them to public view or because of other unknown considerations.<sup>155</sup>

The North Palace was destroyed and set on fire with the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC at the hand of a coalition of Medes and Chaldeans. It may be in connection to these events that several representations of the king and his attendants suffered damages, in some cases deliberate mutilations being evident. As far as the unearthed reliefs show, Ashurbanipal's heirs did not alter the representations or add any of theirs. But one of his sons did so in Sennacherib's palace. If the spaces left blank are indeed a sign that Ashurbanipal did not finish the North Palace, the fact that they remained so suggest that neither of his sons attempted to finish it and may have had their royal seat in the large Place without Rival.

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<sup>154</sup> In his analysis of the phases of construction of Sennacherib's palace, J. M. Russell suggests a length of time covering 12 years from the planning of the palace to its final completion, based on Sennacherib's dated building accounts. Russell, 1991: 78-93.

<sup>155</sup> It is unimaginable that the throne room façade would be left unfinished while corridors within the palace were richly decorated.

## **2.3. Architectural context of the North Palace**

### **2.3.1. General features of late Assyrian palaces**

All late Assyrian palaces, whether royal residences, arsenals, or dwellings of the royal family, were conceived on a common ground plan.<sup>156</sup> The palace consisted of numerous suites, organized as independent quarters in their own right, accessed from courtyards. Communication between the various parts of the palace was enabled through a well-defined system of passages. Several types of spaces were arranged in various configurations to compose one suite: large reception room communicating with the courts and terraces, retiring room, bathroom, storage, vestibule and staircase. Their arrangements formed generally recognizable patterns. D. Kertai labels these configurations as Reception/Residential suites (monumental hall with a retiring room and a bathroom), the Throne Room suites (similar to the previous, but by far the largest and therefore most monumental quarter of the palace), Double-Sided reception suites (two large reception rooms of the same size, opening off large courtyards with a room in between and many other annexed spaces around them, including bathrooms and storages) and Dual Core suites (two central rooms of similar size with a large range of attachments around them).<sup>157</sup> Monumental suites of the types reception/ residential and double-sided were common to all palaces, while Double Core suites became dominant in Sennacherib's palace, but with the double-sided suite still as the most grandiose.

The suites within the palace were arranged primarily around two monumental courtyards – an outer court of larger size and a central, smaller court. They were connected by the throne room suite, which stood in between and communicated in both sides, acting like a threshold. The outer court was reserved for administrative offices disposed around it, including the throne room proper, while from the central courtyard various apartments opened, reception or residential in nature, and further courtyards and terraces. The throne room suite always came in a standard plan and seems to have suffered fewest changes over the years. It is the only

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<sup>156</sup> Turner, 1970. The conception of the palatial space is not an exclusively royal one. All common residences were conceived in the same idea of independent suites, with the largest and most important one positioned to the front. The configurations and the size of the lot they were built on, however, forced them to adapt their layout and the arrangement of their suites. Wicke and Greenfield, 2013: 71; Kertai, 2015: 239. The architecture of the temples, however, when it comes to the representative suites, differed from the palatial arrangement, in the sense that large suits were limited in the temple complex. Kertai, 2015: 240.

<sup>157</sup> Kertai, 2015: Chapter 10.

suite whose actual function is known – the setting of the king enthroned, always constructed in a monumental size, dwarfing all the other suites of the palace (which in themselves are large by any standards). It would have been the first suite encountered by the guests of the palace, as it dominated the outer courtyard. The location of suites within the palatial complex may provide more information about their function than their configuration does. Those in the forecourts, easily accessible, may have worked as offices. Those behind the main reception suits may have been more suited as living quarters.

### **2.3.2. Enclosing walls and inner space of the North Palace**

The North Palace at Nineveh backed the northern edges of the Kuyunjik mound with its two northern sides (**Pl. 1** and **Pl. 2**). The two southern sides of the palace were exposed to the open space of the citadel and the buildings in the vicinity. Less than half of the North Palace was recovered (**Pl. 3**). However, the common plan shared by late Assyrian palaces allows for suppositions where there are missing parts. It also allows for observations where the North Palace differed from its predecessors in the recovered areas.

#### ***The enclosing walls***

Nothing is known of the Northeast wall, as it was not excavated. The Northwest enclosing wall, towards the edge of the mound, was traced for a length of about 200 meters, after which it suddenly changed direction with 90 degrees away from the palace, on a distance of 20 meters. The extension slightly widens at some point and then resumes shape, ending at the edge of the mound (see **Pl. 2**). The West corner was 6 meters lower than the rest of the palace; for this reason the Northwest wall was elevated for a certain length on a base of stone blocks until it met the level of the rest of the wall.<sup>158</sup> The lowest point of the West corner accounted for an entrance hall (Room S) allowing access to and from the palace through two doorways: a small doorway on its South side and a columned entrance of large size, forming a portico, on its West side. Of the latter, only the round stone bases of the columns were preserved (measuring 1.80 m in diameter), indicating that the columns themselves may have been made of different, perishable material or re-utilized later in some other purposes. It was argued that such a large portico entrance couldn't have been closed by a door, implying that

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<sup>158</sup> A graphic with the reconstructed elevated wall and the stone base was provided by Turner in Barnett, 1976: 33, fig. 12.

the outer space it led to must have been further protected.<sup>159</sup> A park attached to the North Palace is mentioned by Ashurbanipal in his building inscriptions. If this park was located beyond Room S, occupying the space towards the edge of the mound, a wall was needed to protect the park itself from the outside. The extension of the Northwest wall to the edge of the mound may have been part of such an enclosure. But a similar one was required to the West as well. Unfortunately, no excavations were done for such a wall. The movement towards the inner part of the palace was restricted and controlled by the small hall W which made the connection with an ascending passage (Passages R and A).

The Southwest wall measures around 105 meters. The Southeast wall was only partially traced for around 100 m before being lost. The two walls met in a point very close to the Temple of Nabû. Along the Southeast wall a doorway was recovered, allowing access from the open space of the citadel to the outer courtyard of the palace. This may have been the main entrance, according to the plans of better preserved palaces. If the Southeast wall followed the extent of the parallel Northwest wall, the entrance would have been positioned at the end of the outer courtyard, furthest away from the throne room. An outside guest would have had to walk the whole length of the courtyard to reach the audience place of the king, but it would have allowed distance to comprehend the monumental size of the throne room as well. This entrance would have allowed access to the palace from a possible East gate of the citadel, which communicated with the lower part of Nineveh, positioned somewhere between the North Palace and Sennacherib's palace.<sup>160</sup>

Another entrance was reported somewhere at the southern corner of the palace by G. Smith, but without any other details except the existence of rather small-sized bases of columns. This would imply a columned entrance similar to the western portico, which would leave the entrance unprotected and exposed to the outside space of the citadel.<sup>161</sup> No plan recorded by Boucher shows any such entrance in the South side of the enclosing wall. What does appear from Boucher's plan of the North Palace is that when the southwestern and southeastern walls meet, they form a recession, which comes very close to the Nabû Temple. However, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that a doorway to enable close communication with the temple ever existed in the South part of the palace.

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<sup>159</sup> Kertai, 2015: 172.

<sup>160</sup> Reade, 2000: 391 (fig. 2), 398-399.

<sup>161</sup> Kertai, 2015: 172.

In the absence of its Northeast side with its outer court, the exact size of the palace remains unknown. While some authors argue for its extension covering the whole northern side of the mound, beyond the northern-most wall mapped at the time of the excavations,<sup>162</sup> others argue for keeping the hypothetical reconstruction within the boundaries of the northern most point.<sup>163</sup> The first interpretation of the palace's extension would render an outer court(s) of considerable proportions (four times the size of the inner part of the palace), while the latter would render a royal edifice considerably smaller than the neighboring "Palace without Rival", but still a monumental royal residence, comparable to the palaces of his predecessors.<sup>164</sup> The throne room in such a case would mark the center of the complex, which seems to be the rule with the known palaces.

### *Within the walls*

Within this enclosure most of the known part of the North Palace represents the Southwest area (see **Pl. 3**). The excavations revealed a number of 24 rooms (that is, courtyards, chambers, and passages), which were ascribed letters from A to W. Few more spaces are implied only by the existence of their reliefs.

The interior of the palatial complex was organized largely according to the general plan of late Assyrian palaces. The remains of the North Palace revealed the existence of the outer courtyard (Room O), and the central court (Room J), with a throne room suite of great size standing in between (Rooms M – the reception room, L – the retiring room, N – the vestibule, and the large throne room ramp). The outer courtyard O is mostly unknown. It survives in the shape of the façade of the throne room, a part of its western wall adjacent to Rooms P and B, and the remains of the entrance on the Southeast wall. It is not known how large it was. It may have been surrounded by administrative offices.<sup>165</sup> A special architectural feature of the North Palace is that a set of stairs rouse from the outer court leading to the throne room, extending probably to all three entrances.

The Southeast side of the throne room suite, where the throne is normally located and from where a bathroom opens, is not entirely known. Only one suite of those around the

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<sup>162</sup> Reade, 2000: 391, fig. 2.

<sup>163</sup> Kertai, 2013: 18-19 and 2015: 170.

<sup>164</sup> See a comparison in plan of the North Palace and the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, as well as a comparison of all late Assyrian palaces in Kertai, 2015: 171 (fig. 8.1) and 234 (fig. 11.1).

<sup>165</sup> See reconstructed plan by Turner in Barnett, 1976: 28 (fig. 7).

central courtyard was recovered, the one located to the Southwest from the throne room suite (Rooms I – the monumental reception room with three entrances, H – the central room, G – a vestibule, and F – a bathroom). No back door enabled direct communication between the latter and the throne room. Because the central room H was not recovered in its totality, its exact size is not known. In width, it seems to have been just as large as the reception room I. If it was as long as the latter, this suite would have been of the dual core type; if it was smaller, a large reception/residence suite would also be possible. The Southwest end of the suite was not excavated, leaving the possibility that other spaces were attached to it.

Opposite the throne room suite, on the Southwest side of the central courtyard, a long stylobate-like base with traces of decorative moldings was recovered, marking most probably the existence of the wall of another suite. Nothing can be said about its configuration or size, but this particular decoration for a suite's wall was uncommon. Behind this wall pavements were found by Thompson (which he ascribed to a courtyard), but which may have stood for the floors of the suite designed there.<sup>166</sup> The presence of doorways, decoration and protective figures buried in the foundation are known to have stemmed from this space.<sup>167</sup> At the southern end of the wall, judging by Boutcher's plan, the remains of an entrance may have been profiled (and as such it was reconstructed by Reade's plan) for a space opening towards the Southwest. On the opposite direction, he drew a single thin line, whose meaning remains unknown. If this line stands for the possible edge of the courtyard on the Southeast side of the central court,<sup>168</sup> which is completely unknown, the remaining space between it and the enclosing wall would have allowed for a monumental suite to be placed there, with two parallel rooms similar in size to the known Rooms I and H. In Reade's reconstruction of the ground plan of the North Palace, a narrow corridor would have also fitted at the side of this hypothetical suite, as the outside wall enlarges at this point (see **Pl. 3**). It would have made possible a direct communication between the outer and the central courts, without implicating the throne room and it would have corresponded on the other side of the throne room suite to the more controlled system of passages C, D, B and P.

As already mentioned, a western portal suite enabled a second access to and from the palace, maybe to a park. It was composed of the large entrance room S, a vestibule T and a

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<sup>166</sup> Turner in Barnett, 1976: 31.

<sup>167</sup> Kertai, 2015: 177.

<sup>168</sup> Kertai, 2015: 177.

bathroom V. An ascending corridor opened up from Room S. On the floors of the western portal suite (in Rooms S, T and V) a few series of reliefs were found fallen, but which did not belong to these rooms; a single relief was recovered from passage R, without it having originated there. It is assumed they must have crumbled there from a suite of rooms positioned above. According to the rooms in which the fallen reliefs were recovered from, the original rooms were labeled Rooms S<sup>1</sup>, T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup> (to the latter belonging also the slab found in passage R). This original suite would have corresponded to the regular level of the rest of the palace. However, the exact number of rooms is not known. Judging by the relief features (subject matter and register arrangement), it may be that they stem from two, three or even more rooms. The exact architectural configuration of these original rooms remains unknown. R. D. Barnett proposes a similar arrangement as the portico suite below. This, however, is impossible to probe, because the number of recovered reliefs is too small. D. Kertai, argues that the great weight of the reliefs would have created difficulties in having them supported by a floor above the portico, and proposes a more eastern position of the suite, admitting also that this would not explain the reliefs ending up as they did. He also takes into account the reliefs actually being part of the outer façade of the ground floor, rather than a suite of rooms, with only some slabs falling into the portico suite, while others falling to the exterior.<sup>169</sup>

Thus, when considering these reliefs we may take into account at least two setting possibilities. It may be that we are talking about a decorated facade or that we are dealing with a suite of rooms above the portico, but without all its reliefs having been recovered. The single slab found in passage R, which seems to belong to the series found in Rooms T and V, suggests that human agency and displacement of reliefs may also be a possibility, although the effort of carrying them around just to discard them would have been enormous. It may also imply that yet another room was positioned somewhere above the descending passage R or tangential with it, whose position would also correspond to the level of the rest of the palace. Its other reliefs would have fallen in other directions, considering that the space to the Northwest wall of the palace was never researched. Because of this endlessly complicated matter, the fallen reliefs are treated as a separate chapter in this thesis.

A peculiar suite, without any correspondent among the previous palaces, is the suite of Rooms B, P and Q, located at the side of the staircase and the outer court. The cut-out of the suit is only fragmentary known, but the part which was recovered does not correspond to any

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<sup>169</sup> Kertai 2015: 180-182.

previous configuration of spaces. Room P, as it was mapped by Boucher, is comparable in size with the throne room itself; it does not resemble a reception room though. Its position ensured communication in all its sides, bringing together the area behind it, with the outer courtyard, the throne room suite and the inner part of the palace. This recommends it more for a transitional space, too large for a passage, but too small for a courtyard. The architectural features of Room B, which opened the way towards the heart of the passages system, support this assumption. Its columned entrance of a portico type (although considerably smaller than Room S) may have required a more protected area around it, and a controlled access, which Room P was suitable to provide. Furthermore, the entrance to Room B was guarded by protective figures, underlying the importance of the space contained within. Nothing is known about what might have been beyond Room P. Room Q seems to extend away from the axis of Room P, but it is unfortunately not researched further. The large remaining space beyond Room P is completely unknown; nor is its existence common. Administrative offices are normally positioned along the side of the outer court. Only in the palace of Sargon II at Dur-šarrukin, another suite started beyond the offices. But in that case it was a monumental suite (with two reception halls and a retiring room between them – a double sided suite) functioning as secondary throne room area.

A part of the corridors and passages system was also recovered. As novelty, a route around the staircase appeared, ensuring communication between the central court, the outer court, and the area northwest of it through passage K and Room P. More so, it connected all these areas with the throne room itself, through antechamber N. The existence of this route and of passage K seems to be connected to the similarly new arrangement of Rooms B-P. And this may in turn be connected to whatever stood behind Room P. At this point the outer wall of the palace changes its trajectory and enlarges the space contained within. At the crossroad of the communicating system was Room D, which opened in four directions: to the western portal through passages A and descending passage R; to the Southwest and Southeast through passage E; to the central court through passage C; and to the B, P, Q rooms. Nothing is known about the area between passages E and R. If a suite did exist above or close to the western portal, passage E might have enabled access to and from it. Same if another suite was located between itself and passage R.

To summarize, as far as the recovered archaeological sources are concerned, the pattern of palaces with reliefs suggests that during the Sargonid dynasty it became more common for the king to initiate the building project of a royal edifice displaying reliefs of his



accomplishments. More so, within the Sargonid dynasty proper the historical background against which such an edifice was built differed from one ruler to another. Legitimizing issues due to doubtful ascension to the throne and civil war may have prompted Sargon II's decision; the particularly negative situation of Sargon II's demise on the battlefield, which questioned the king's divine support, together with all the implications of an unburied and unattended body, may have determined Sennacherib to relocate the capital and build a palace to display his glory; present succession issues, influenced by past dramatic experiences including the assassination of his father by his own sons, may have generated many of Esarhaddon's innovations concerning palatial buildings and their commemorative texts. As for Ashurbanipal, there was an urge early in his reign to reassert his legitimate accession to the throne in a palatial building context; a need for the display of his military victory against a particular enemy towards the middle of his reign in Sennacherib's palace; and the decision of a full project of palace building and extensive decoration with his exploits after the defeat of his brother and the Babylonian rebellion. This materialized in the construction of the North Palace, in connection to which his own ascension to the throne was brought back into the royal rhetoric. The layout of the North Palace corresponds largely to the common ground plan of late Assyrian palaces. Judging by the recovered area, a palace of modest dimensions appears, considerably smaller than Sennacherib's palace and the palace of Sargon II at Dur-šarrukin.<sup>170</sup> There were, as far as the recovered spaces allow, no suites of the monumental double-sided type, with many auxiliary spaces attached to them. However, it still had a very large throne room suite, a large reception/residential secondary suite with three monumental entrances and a *bit-hilani* arrangement (columned, Hittite-inspired portico). It also shows new architectural features: a set of stairs leading to the throne room; a newly introduced suite with a very large passage hall beyond the outer courtyard (Rooms P-Q) and, perhaps connected to it, an additional passage communicating with the central court (Room K).

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<sup>170</sup> See comparison of the North Palace and Sennacherib's Palace in **Pl. 2**.

### III. Royal representations in the annals

Several editions bearing Ashurbanipal's annals are known: Editions E (E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub>), B/D (same text, but different building project), C, Kh, and G were composed prior to the building of the North Palace; Editions F and A were composed for celebrating the construction of the North Palace; a further Prism T is a mixture of texts from Editions C and F (written in the same year as the latter); two more editions were composed later in Ashurbanipal's reign – Editions H and J, which seem to bear each the same text, one rendered in Neo-Babylonian and the other in Neo-Assyrian script. The latter two are very fragmentary, but they seem to have been similar to a text inscribed on large limestone slabs found in the Temple of Ishtar at Nineveh.<sup>171</sup> The annals were (re)issued at certain significant moments throughout the reign, in connection to important building projects, which they commemorated. Previous issues were adjusted to accommodate new events. At times, the same military event is rendered differently, new explicit details are added (like certain names), suggesting that the earlier editions were not the only source of information for the later ones. The editions were dated to various eponym officials and lists of these officials were kept in the archives (the canonical list). Only one official mentioned in Ashurbanipal's editions of annals figures in the eponym list, after which the list breaks; the other eponyms are ordered by modern scholars in a so-called non-canonical list according to various criteria.<sup>172</sup> Corroborating the information contained by the editions with information from other documents (letters and chronicles), approximate dates are ascribed to the composition of the annals.<sup>173</sup>

This chapter discusses the royal image rendered by the annals composed for the North Palace – Editions F and A. However, they need to be evaluated in their rightful editorial context. In order to appreciate the significance of the North Palace as building program at a particular moment in Ashurbanipal's reign, the editions are followed chronologically and in relationship to their historical background. For this, the chapter is structured in four parts, according to the sequences of issuing. A more detailed description of the military episodes of

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<sup>171</sup> Ashurbanipal's inscriptions with the annals are either detailed editions: E, B, D, C, F and A, or abbreviated texts: Prism T (with a long description of building projects and a single military campaign) and probably the fragmentary editions H and J (and the Ishtar Temple inscription), with a large number of military campaigns, but greatly abbreviated.

<sup>172</sup> See the canonical and post-canonical list of eponyms in Millard, 1994. See a newly proposed sequence for eponyms from 654 to 648 BC in Novotny, 2008: 128.

<sup>173</sup> Gerardi, 1987, 49-75; Borger, 1996: 257; and new proposals in Novotny, 2008.

these editions, for reasons of space, is given in **Appendix 2**.<sup>174</sup> The thesis follows for most of its part Borger's edition of Ashurbanipal's annals from 1996, but it also considers the further clarifications and later contributions of several other studies.<sup>175</sup>

The text of the annals can be structured in five parts: 1) the prologue with the king's name, his titles, genealogy and epithets, praise of his temple restorations and divine blessings; 2) an account of military affairs rendered as victories; 3) the commemoration of the building project the inscription was prepared for; 4) a section with instructions, blessings and curses for the future kings who would come across the inscription; and 5) a dating formula, according to the high official functioning as eponym in the respective year. The text of an edition works as a whole, providing explanation for the actions and logical liaisons between its various parts. The elements emphasized in the prologue work together with the king's military affairs, their arrangement and how they are justified; the text itself is further part of a whole process connected to a particular building project occurring at a certain time. Following these connections helps extract the particular royal image shaped by the texts written with the construction of the North Palace in mind.

The dates of the editions are indicated in the chronological chart (at the beginning of the thesis) to show their proximity to the political events they contained. It becomes readily evident that the military incursions, gathered from a certain point on as series called *girru*,<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> The editing process for the Elamite and Arab campaigns in the various editions of the annals were discussed by Gerardi, 1987 and 1992. They were written before Borger's edition of the annals in 1996 and the later studies. Therefore, it may be not without use to have the military affairs described here according to the latest studies.

<sup>175</sup> For further information on Edition E, the thesis uses the studies of Weissert and Onasch, 1992 (the prologue), Weissert, 1997, and Novotny, 2005. For Prisms/ Editions C, Kh and G, the thesis follows Novotny, 2008.

<sup>176</sup> Various mechanisms for arranging the military exploits were used by the Assyrian scribes for the organization of the annals. In the texts of Tighlath-Pileser III, with whom the annals become a genre in its own right, the military interventions were arranged chronologically and introduced through the expression "in the year of the eponym X, I went against...". Sargon II introduced his military incursions by the expression "in my regnal year (*palû*)", keeping thus a chronological arrangement (but raising problems with campaigns flowing into a next year). Sennacherib kept the chronological arrangement of the campaigns, but called them *girru* ("in my *n<sup>th</sup>* *girru*"), a term which would better cover military events with several episodes, or which extended into a following year. Esarhaddon abandoned both an introductory phrase of any kind and the chronological sequencing, grouping his military exploits geographically. Ashurbanipal kept the geographical arrangement of Esarhaddon and separated the series of military encounters terming them again *girru*. Thus, campaigns

were arranged largely on geographical grounds. However, this arrangement was not strictly defined so and another agenda was embedded in the arrangements as it will become apparent during the discussion.<sup>177</sup>

### 3.1. First wave of annalistic editions

Ashurbanipal's first (known) annalistic inscriptions, recuperated from Nineveh,<sup>178</sup> were the **Edition E**<sup>179</sup> texts (E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub>), dated to 666 BC and 665/664 BC,<sup>180</sup> similar to a certain extent, but containing several substantial differences to make them editions in their own right. One celebrated the construction of a wall; the other mentioned a palace (unknown which of the two texts contained it and unknown palace).<sup>181</sup> The prologue of the Edition E texts is of an autobiographical nature, but is fragmentary. The parts preserved resemble in many respects that of another early inscription, written in Ashurbanipal's first regnal year – text L<sub>4</sub>.<sup>182</sup> The prologue of Edition E texts contained a succession of legitimizing elements: titles with the universality of the king's rule; the *topos* of his creation and selection by the great Assyrian and Babylonian gods; royal epithets (wise, able and the gods' trusty shepherd);

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undertaken in the same area but which took place at different moments in time were gathered in a same *girru*. See a full discussion on the evolution of the annals in Tadmor, 1981 and Gerardi, 1987: 21-28.

<sup>177</sup> Evidence by P. Gerardi when discussing the Elamite campaigns of Ashurbanipal. Gerardi, 1987.

<sup>178</sup> Two fragments were found during C. Thompson's excavations in Nineveh, but their exact archaeological context is not known. No information is available for the many other fragments of these prisms. See Weissert and Onasch, 1992: 59-60.

<sup>179</sup> Borger, 1996: 175-184, 204, 210-212, 217-218, 219-220, 251-252. On the prologue of Edition E, see also Weissert and Onasch, 1992; for further additions to the text, see Weissert, 1997: 340, 357 and Novotny, 2005. For discussions on Edition E, see Cogan and Tadmor, 1977.

<sup>180</sup> Cogan and Tadmor, 1977: 81-82.

<sup>181</sup> Borger, 1996: 183-184 (§18, 7; §19, 13); Weissert and Onasch, 1992: 61.

<sup>182</sup> Text L<sub>4</sub> (tablet K 2694+K 3050, found in Nineveh) is the copy of a stele inscription written in 668 BC, shortly after Ashurbanipal's accession as king (669 BC), for the installation of his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin on the Babylonian throne. The stele was to be set in Marduk's temple, addressing thus a Babylonian audience. Although it introduced Šamaš-šumu-ukin as the new ruler of Babylon, the text was conceived in exaltation of Ashurbanipal. It contains a long account of Ashurbanipal's accession to the throne of Assyria, implying his predestination for kingship, his receptive mind for learning (endowment from Babylonian gods) and his skills in military training. For this he was favored by the king, selected as heir from among princes and made to enter the *bīt redūti*, much in the appreciation of all dignitaries, for whom he would intercede in front of the king. All four corners of the world came in perfect order and peace. See prologue in Parpola, 2007, Vol. 2: 116 and Borger, 1996: 187-188. See full translations in Luckenbill, 1927: 378-382 (985-990) and Streck, 1916: 252-271 (§9).

genealogical line through Esarhaddon (stressing also the latter's titles as governor of Babylon and king of Sumer and Akkad) and probably to Sennacherib and Sargon II (broken); large break (perhaps references to Ashurbanipal's excellent learning and warfare training, leading to his selection as heir to the throne);<sup>183</sup> Esarhaddon's imposition of loyalty oaths on his subjects for the acknowledgement of Ashurbanipal as his heir; his entering the *bīt redūti* (becoming crown prince) in a particular month (Ayyaru, month of Ea, lord of mankind); and the final settlement on the throne of his predecessors, desired and positively received by all subjects. Although addressed to an Assyrian audience, it recounts that, once on the throne, Ashurbanipal undertook work on both the temple of Assur and Marduk (in Babylon). Sacrifices to the gods were successfully offered; in turn, they brought his foes under his sway. At this point, the military affairs are enumerated (Egypt 1, Qirbit and Lydia 1 – see chronological chart). They are not gathered in *girrus*, but separated by a horizontal line. Between the victory against Qirbit and the willing submission of Lydia, text E<sub>1</sub> (the earliest of the E editions) preserves the very beginning of a hymn-like passage, possibly containing an account of a royal lion hunt and the celebration of the *akitu* (New Year) festival of Ištar in Arbela.<sup>184</sup> If so, it would be the only edition of Ashurbanipal's annals to contain lion hunt

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<sup>183</sup> A prism fragment, Ki 1904-10-9,359 (BM 99326), contains a text identical to a passage in L<sub>4</sub> and deals with Ashurbanipal's divine protection and his education. Because it was inscribed on a prism, this fragment may have been part of an edition of the annals; because it bears affinities with text L<sub>4</sub>, it may have been composed in the early years of Ashurbanipal's reign. It may have belonged to Edition E texts or some other early edition. If similar, the now missing part in the prologue may have contained references to Ashurbanipal's education and wisdom, for which he was selected and appointed to princeship (in the *bīt redūti*) and kingship. What is certain is that there existed an early account ascribed to prisms (annalistic texts) with Ashurbanipal's appointment as crown prince on the basis of his education and wisdom before and as recommendations for his entering the "succession house". See Weissert and Onasch, 1992: 71-77. The prism fragment was introduced by Borger in his rendition of Edition E. Borger, 1996: 175-176, 204 (§2).

<sup>184</sup> E. Weissert ascribed a fragment of a six-faced prism to Edition E<sub>1</sub> (82-5-22,2), in relation to this hymn-like passage. The first lines of the fragment are damaged. Immediately after the successful hunt of a pack of wild lions in the plain, *akitu* festivities are mentioned, but without making a direct connection between the episodes. Ištar of Arbela and her *akitu* festival were connected at times to public presentation of captives in Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal's documents. Weissert: 1997: 347-348 See also Borger, 1996: 198-199 (Borger lists the text in a section of "Miscellaneous" prism fragments). Even if the fragment did not belong to Edition E texts, it being a prism counts for the existence of an early edition of Ashurbanipal's annals which did mention the royal lion hunt.

references.<sup>185</sup> According to the text, Ashurbanipal did not take part in any of the military actions himself, but they were all conducted by his troops sent from Nineveh (to Egypt) or by his (never named) generals in the border territories (Qirbit). Instead, he was directly involved in the lion hunt and the preparations for the *akitu* ceremonies. The texts were written early in Ashurbanipal's reign, after his first military encounters, which required him to secure border territories in the East (especially the city of Der, the main point of access to and from Elam) and reinstall the order set by his father Esarhaddon in Egypt. E<sub>1</sub> was written shortly after the campaign against rebellious Taharqa, former rival of his father Esarhaddon, who eluded capture (Egypt 1). E<sub>2</sub> was written in the following year(s), during the second campaign in Egypt, against Taharqa's successor Tandamane (Egypt 2), but the account of it is not rendered, probably because the scores were not yet settled. The Egyptian encounter was considered by the scribes of more importance and was set on the first position in the annals, although chronologically it occurred only after the Qirbit affair. This suggests that the scope was not a chronological arrangement of events, but another agenda was implied. Egypt was of main importance for Ashurbanipal and a victory there may have been mandatory in order to strengthen his recent accession to the throne, given that his father Esarhaddon died during a march against the rebellious Taharqa.<sup>186</sup> Esarhaddon's illness and dying during military affairs may have been seen as losing the support of the gods, but there is no way of telling (no Assyrian sources refer to his death). Ashurbanipal acceded to the throne according to Esarhaddon's publicly expressed will and imposition of loyalty oaths upon all subjects. The latter's death during a march against Egypt could have been used to contest this nomination, as it would have come from a king who lost divine favor, especially if Ashurbanipal was not the eldest son and Esarhaddon's arrangement was something of a novelty. A victory in Egypt, with an account of Esarhaddon's conquest and imposition of Assyrian order (on which the texts insist), with no mention of his death, was thus mandatory for Ashurbanipal's securing his position on the throne. The prologue shows that at this early stage another aspect of Ashurbanipal's kingship needed to be underlined – the scribes connected Ashurbanipal's

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<sup>185</sup> Accounts of royal hunt of lions or other wild animals were present in the annalistic inscriptions of many Assyrian kings. They were introduced in the military exploits section, between campaigns. See, for example, an inscription on winged lion in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu in RIMAP 2: 226-227 (A.O.101.2, lines 40-42). Hunting accounts never appear in other of Ashurbanipal's annals, but they make the subject of votive inscriptions (archival copies of steles). Weissert, 1997: 340.

<sup>186</sup> No Assyrian document mentions Esarhaddon's dying during the march, but it was recorded by the Babylonian chronicles. Grayson, 1975: 86 (30-32), 127 (28-30).

image not only to the great Assyrian gods, but also to the great Babylonian deities, as a Babylonian ruler would, although at this point, his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin was already the legitimate occupant of the Babylonian throne. The text thus sought to emphasize also an image of Ashurbanipal that would be acceptable to and flattering a Babylonian audience.

### 3.2. Second wave of annalistic editions

The following editions were written only many years later in Ashurbanipal's reign, although several military events had happened in the meantime and territories were gained while others were lost. Issues of the annals were composed every year from 649 to 645, at times with even two editions written in the same year. **Edition B**<sup>187</sup> and **Edition D**<sup>188</sup> were similar, but for their eponym. Edition B was written in 649 BC during the eponymy of Ahi-ilaja of Karchemis, the last name in the eponym list,<sup>189</sup> and celebrated the work on the arsenal palace at Nineveh. Edition D was written one year later, in 648 BC, during the eponymy of Belšunu of Hindana, not present in the canonical list, but known to have followed immediately after Ahi-ilaja. It celebrated the work on an inner wall of Nineveh. The actual find spots of the prisms are not recorded. Both editions were written during the Babylonian rebellion led by Ashurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin. By the time the editions were composed, the rebellion had already been running for three years and had not yet reached its conclusion (see chronological chart). For this reason, the Babylonian campaign proper was not introduced in the military accounts. The prologue is no longer of an autobiographical nature; it contains titles stressing the universality of Ashurbanipal's rulership, genealogical line through Esarhaddon to Sennacherib, the *topos* of the favorable destiny established by the gods, divine endowment with receptiveness, divine selection for kingship from among princes, divine endowment with strength, manhood and great power. In a logical follow up of the universalistic titles and the royal qualities, the lands from sunrise to sunset were brought under his sway by the gods. An emphasis is put on his priesthood carried out on the gods' liking, which comes in line with the next section briefly enumerating the temples

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<sup>187</sup> Borger, 1996: 16-18, 20-21, 23-26, 28-37, 92-118, 205, 212-231, 243-245, 252-253.

<sup>188</sup> For the text, see the same coordinates as for Edition B above. For the different building project section, see Borger, 1996: 118-119, 252-253 (D§59-62).

<sup>189</sup> Gerardi, 1987: 57. Some fragments preserved the colophon mentioning the eponym Belšunu, no longer part of the canonical list, but known to have followed Ahi-ilaja. They probably belonged to Edition D, similar in wording, but commemorating a different project.

Ashurbanipal rebuilt and embellished. It is followed by a description of the well-being of Assyria during his reign, effect of divine benevolence due to his rightful priesthood and kingship. His contribution to the building projects and gifts for the sanctuaries exceeded that of his father, the text announces. It then recounts an up-dated retrospective of Ashurbanipal's military exploits, now called *girrus* and numbered; they are military encounters or willing submissions: I-II – Egypt 1 and Egypt 2; III – Tyre, Arwad 1, Tabal, Arwad 2 and Lydia 1; IV – Qirbit; V – Manneans, Medes and Urartu 1; VI – Elam 1; VII – Elam 2; VIII – Gambulu, Elam 3 and Arabs 1. Both campaigns to Egypt are introduced and still make the first entry, while nothing is said of how in the meantime, already by 656 BC, Egypt was out of Assyrian dominance and united under Psammetichus I.<sup>190</sup> Apparently no other military encounter had taken place for its re-conquering. But Egypt was still needed in the annals to be put in connection to Ashurbanipal's first years and his continuing his father's policy. Neither is there any reference to Gyges of Lydia supporting Egypt, breaking thus the alliance with Assyria. Although ascribed to different consecutive *girrus*, Elam 2 (against Teumman) and Gambulu (against Dunnanu) are presented as interconnected, but not grouped together. The latter is grouped with Elam 3 (Tammariu II and Indabibi) and Arabs 1 (with events shortly preceding the Babylonian rebellion). The introduction of the Arab warfare in the same *girru* with Elamite and Gambulian affairs suggests that the *girru* arrangement was rather thematic than geographic. Another thread of thought stood behind the structuring of the campaigns starting with Edition B, just as Editions E showed chronological accuracy was not the target. Apparently, the Arab campaign did not have anything in common with the rest of the encounters in *girru* VIII (was earlier), whose affairs were otherwise interconnected. What all the affairs in *girru* VIII have in common is that their main characters became part of the Babylonian uprising. We know that the Babylonian rebellion was a complex conflict, implying a coalition of Babylonians, Chaldeans, Arameans, factions of the Elamite royal circle and Arab leaders. The only references to the Babylonian rebellion, otherwise missing in Edition B (and D), are in Elam 3, concerning Elamite rulers sided with the rebellious brother. As for the Arabs, only the episode preceding the Babylonian rebellion was accounted, while nothing is said of the Arabs joining forces with the Babylonian uprising, because their leaders eluded capture for the time being. The whole Arab campaign consists in dispatched Assyrian troops, subject kings capturing rebels and willing submissions, with no direct involvement of the Assyrian king himself, although all actions are done in his name. In

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<sup>190</sup> Kuhrt, 1995: 500.



all the encounters except for Urartu 1 and the Arab affair, the king is said to have participated directly, including in Egypt and Qirbit, where previous Editions E had the troops and generals taking the action. In Urartu, a vassal of Ashurbanipal captured the enemy. This does not undermine Ashurbanipal's position at all, nor is it expected that such a thing would be contained by the annals. On the contrary, it emphasizes the efficiency of his kingship, with an efficient Assyrian army and goods flowing in, vassals accomplishing their duties, foreign kings acknowledging Ashurbanipal's might and the overall success of restoring order. It also functions as useful device for accounting past issues which still echoed at the time of the writing, and whose follow up was still in progress. Before knowing the outcome of events in progress, and after three exhausting years of fights when Edition B was written, this literary build-up provided precaution and distancing from unknown results, but all translated in past victories on the same enemy and presentation of the current situation as re-establishment of order. The emphasis of the inscription seems to have been on the campaigns immediately preceding the Babylonian uprising: Elam 2 and Gambulu, which took place only 3 years before the Babylonian rebellion, and the Arabs (Arabs 1) dealt with just shortly before Šamaš-šumu-ukin's betrayal. In Elam 2 Ashurbanipal states having cut off himself the head of Elamite king Teumman in front of the latter's troops, while the Gambulu affair contains a long list of treacherous figures and their exemplary punishments, with dismembered bodies carried throughout the realm to be seen by everybody. It regarded Elamite messengers, Chaldean fugitives from the Sealand, the Gambulean king, his family and Gambulean officials, charged with supporting Elam. It seems that a scenario of a wider action against Assyria, implying Elam and southern Babylonia (both Gambulu and the Sealand) took shape already before Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion. The Arabs on the other hand were also trying to take advantage of the situation and rid themselves off of the Assyrian yoke. The categorical triumph of Ashurbanipal over them and the exemplary punishment just few years earlier would have served to build a positive image for the Assyrian king during the more complex Babylonian rebellion still in progress when Editions B and D were written and with many of the leading rebels still at large. This image was strengthened by the introduction in the account concerning Teumman's defeat of dreams and omens with messages from the gods, ensuring Ashurbanipal's triumph and emphasizing his acting as tool of their commands. While no annalistic account was written immediately after the slaying of Teumman, the campaign however became subject of an account written during the Babylonian rebellion. This past action with a known result was used and enriched with prophetic details which

would have confirmed to the audience that the king is predestined to win, offering thus assurance for the present tensions.

Several further prisms composed after the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion and the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin share a similar text (identical prologue and part of the military accounts), but contain also important differences concerning some of the military matters. These are Prism C, Kh, and G. They were considered by R. Borger to be exponents of the same Edition C. New light on their delimitations has been provided since then by J. Novotny.<sup>191</sup> This speaks for their consideration as editions in their own right. All these texts are very fragmentary and parts of their narrations remain uncovered.

**Edition C**<sup>192</sup> was probably written in 647 BC,<sup>193</sup> shortly preceding Editions Kh and G, on the occasion of the work on a palace (unknown which and where, due to damaged text). It builds on the text of Edition B with newly added details and updated military affairs. It is the first annalistic text written after the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion<sup>194</sup> and the first one to contain it. The prologue is similar to Edition B, but enlarges considerably the part recounting the king's work on a long list of temples with a more elaborately description of the precious refurnishing and reinstallation of rites. The work is said to have had been started by Esarhaddon, but never finished, and completed by Ashurbanipal. Temples from both Assyria and Babylonia are enumerated, starting with the temple of Assur, followed by the temple of Marduk, the greatest gods of Assyria and Babylon. His kingship is put in connection with this work, for which the god Sin has chosen him even before he or his father and mother were born. The text continues with describing the abundance in the realm during Ashurbanipal's reign and him having brought all lands in submission. It then proceeds with

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<sup>191</sup> Novotny, 2008.

<sup>192</sup> Borger, 1996: 16-26, 28-37, 41-42, 92-101, 103-117, 122-127, 130-131, 137-155, 158-164, 205-208, 212-218, 220-232, 236-237, 243-245, 253-254.

<sup>193</sup> Novotny, 2008: 128. Because chronologically it stops before the first campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 4), this functions as its *terminus ante quem*. But it may also be that the campaign against Ummanaldas was still in progress at the time the text was composed and thus not included. On the same principle, the Arabs 2 campaign (the Arab support for Šamaš-šumu-ukin) was not included either; although Šamaš-šumu-ukin was already dead, scores were not yet settled with the Arabs, as their leaders apparently eluded capture. The dating of the two military incursions against Ummanaldas (Elam 4 and 5) is difficult to set, many tentative possibilities having been proposed, not without reserves. See Waters, 2000: 117-118, who proposes 647 BC for the first campaign and 646 BC for the second.

<sup>194</sup> For a proposed development of the Babylonian rebellion, see Frame, 1992 (Chapter 8).

the military *girrus*: I-II – Egypt 1 and 2; III – Tyre, Arwad 1, Tabal, Arwad 2 and Lydia 1; IV – Qirbit; V – Mannea, Medes, Urartu 1; VI – Elam 1; VII – Elam 2; VIII – Gambulu, Babylonia, Elam 3 and Arabs 1. The Babylonian rebellion is intertwined with the Elam 3 affairs. The famine and pestilence brought by the war in Babylon are described in great detail and the inhabitants are portrayed as sinners. Šamaš-šumu-ukin is called “the treacherous brother” and the one who offended Assur. His awful death by fire, which destroyed his soul, is accordingly presented as the god’s punishment. The Arabs who took part in the rebellion are still not introduced, most certainly because actions against them still continued. A clear effort to portray Ashurbanipal as a benefactor ruler for Babylon and the Babylonian cities transpires from the prologue of this edition; Ashurbanipal had always acted with the support of the great gods, who were mindful to his righteous priesthood. He righteously continued and finished the work on his father. This would maybe counterbalance the bitter, long war led against Babylon as an act demanded by the gods themselves, including Marduk, the tutelary deity of Babylon, in order to reinstall the order disturbed by Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s rebellion. While Ashurbanipal was portrayed as the continuator of his father’s work, Šamaš-šumu-ukin betrayed their father’s succession arrangements. The latter broke, after all, the oath, triggering the wrath of the gods called to stand witness in the oath swearing and suffering their curses. In such a framework, Ashurbanipal not only kept his legitimacy to rule, but became the tool in Assur’s hands against the treacherous brother, who lost his rights and his life. Ashurbanipal’s concern for the Babylonian gods would also portray him as a Babylonian ruler, despite the war waged for years against Babylon.

Other important events took place shortly after the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and were introduced in **Edition Kh**<sup>195</sup> (previously named by Borger CKalach, suggesting its Edition C affiliation and its place of discovery), written during the eponimy of Nabû-nadin-ahi of Kar-Šalmaneser, ascribed by Novotny to 646 BC.<sup>196</sup> It commemorated the work on the Nabû temple at Nimrud (Kalhu) and its fragments stem from that city. As far as the text was recovered, the prologue and most of the military achievements in Edition Kh take over the text of Edition C. But it introduces for the first time a further campaign – Elam 4, as a new *girru* (unknown number). It is in fact a cumulus of events. Its development included the attempt to capture a rebel hiding in Elam, in the fortress Bit-Imbi, at the time Ummanaldas

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<sup>195</sup> Borger, 1996: Edition Kh: 16-26, 28-37, 41-42, 92-101, 103-117, 127-132, 137-155, 158-165, 205-208, 212-218, 220-232, 236-237, 243-245, 253-254, 257, 381-383.

<sup>196</sup> Novotny, 2008: 128.

was king (therefore Elam 4 is usually called the first campaign against Ummanaldas, although he is not portrayed as the aim). The identity of the rebel is not preserved, but he managed to escape, his son being caught in exchange and flayed. It also mentioned the Elamite king Tammaritu II, who previously sought asylum in Nineveh, to have fled back to Elam from Assyria. People from southern Babylonia were punished for treason and siding with Elam. It also contained punishments on some people in Elam, traitors already in the time of Sennacherib, who had crippled them. Although mentioned as a *girru* in its own, Elam 4 was still connected with the previous Babylonian rebellion and carried its echoes. This suggests that the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and the defeat of Babylon did not eliminate the potential danger of a rebellious Babylonia, with threats still coming from its southern inhabitants and from Elam. They may have still supported the Chaldean Nabû-bel-šumate, who was after all the grandson of Merodach-baladan II, the Chaldean who seized the throne of Babylon from Sennacherib for a while. The Arab 1 campaign follows as a *girru* in its own, still with no information on the participants to the Babylonian rebellion.

In the same year (646 BC) further updating was needed, sign that the political situation must have been dense. They found their way in **Edition G**<sup>197</sup> with the occasion of the work on an inner wall of the citadel at Nineveh. Further details and changes in the arrangement of reports were operated. The punishments of certain characters at the end of the Gambulu affair became slightly larger, suggesting they were still part of the emphasis of the text for stressing categorical defeat in the past and horrid retribution for those who broke their oaths, according to the curses they contained. It also introduced a direct speech of the Elamite king Tammaritu II, who criticized Assyrian direct implication in the internal affairs of Elam, decapitating Teumman in his own land and in front of his own troops by a low ranking Assyrian soldier, or the Assyrian policy of installing its favorites on the Elamite throne (with reference to Ummanigaš). This only met with punishment from the gods and Tammaritu II himself took the road to Nineveh because he fell victim to an internal rebellion. The Elam 4 campaign and the Arab affair switched positions and the latter adds further events – the capture of the Arab queen Adija (Arabs 3), in direct connection with the previous episode (Arabs 1), since she was the wife of a troublesome chieftain, who, although defeated before the Babylonian

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<sup>197</sup> Borger, 1996: Edition G: 16-17, 21-22, 29-30, 35-37, 41-42, 93, 98, 104-106, 108-112, 115-117, 119-120, 127, 130-132, 143-146, 150-154, 159-160, 165-167, 205, 207, 213, 216-217, 221, 224-226, 229-232, 237, 244-245, 257, 338, 370-378.

rebellion started, managed to get away. Still nothing is said about the Arab affair during the rebellion, suggesting the Arabian leading figures were still at large (Arabs 2).

### 3.3. The North Palace building accounts

Just one year later after Editions Kh and G, in 645 BC during Nabû-šar-ahhešu of Samaria,<sup>198</sup> another annalistic text was written: **Edition F**.<sup>199</sup> New data needed to be written down and a new construction project was undertaken: a new royal palace at Nineveh – the *bīt redûti* (the North Palace).

The prologue is reminiscent of the first editions of Ashurbanipal's annals (Editions E texts) and other early inscriptions (Text L<sub>4</sub>), in the sense that it is of an autobiographical nature. There are no royal titles at this point stressing the universality of Ashurbanipal's reign, unlike in Editions E. The emphasis is put solely on Ashurbanipal's ascension to the throne and him being the rightful continuator of a dynastic line.<sup>200</sup> The name is followed by a series of arguments legitimating his selection as heir to the throne: him being the creation of the greatest gods of Assyria (Assur and Mulissu), his explicit position as eldest royal son of the *bīt redûti* ("the house of heirs"),<sup>201</sup> his selection by Assur and Sin (Moon-god, who allows entrance to temples and palaces) since times faraway and his creation in his mother's womb for shepherd-ship over Assyria, his selection for kingship by Šamaš (Sun-god, connected to haruspices and justly judgment) and Adad (storm god, connected with seasonal flooding)<sup>202</sup> and consequently his selection as heir by Esarhaddon who could only followed the gods' will. As such, on a special date (the month of Ea, master of mankind, on the 18<sup>th</sup> –

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<sup>198</sup> According to the order of eponyms in Novotny, 2008: 128. It was previously dated to 646 according to the post-canonical list of Whiting in Millard, 1994: 74.

<sup>199</sup> Borger, 1996: 14-16, 24-26, 28-39, 41-43, 45-59, 72-76, 208-209, 215, 216-217, 218, 220-221, 226, 228, 232-234, 237-239, 239-242, 255-257.

<sup>200</sup> See Weissert, 1992: 76-77.

<sup>201</sup> Although, as we have seen, he most likely was not the eldest son of Esarhaddon.

<sup>202</sup> These were spheres of action the respective gods were explicitly connected with in, for example, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon on behalf of Ashurbanipal or Ashurbanipal's treaty with the Babylonians. See Parpola and Watanabe, 1988: 45 (419) and 67 (11) for Sin; 45 (422) and 67 (8) for Šamaš; 46-47 (440) and 67 (15) for Adad. For the important role played by the queries to Šamaš especially during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, see Starr, 1990.

the day of the hero/ warrior god Šamaš),<sup>203</sup> Esarhaddon had all the subjects of Assyria swear loyalty to his heir to the throne. The prologue then continues with Ashurbanipal's entering the *bīt redûti*, formulated as a link in a lineage chain; the *bīt redûti* was where Sennacherib exercised princship and kingship, where Esarhaddon was born and raised, exercised rulership over Assyria and all rulers, enlarged his family and gathered together his kin and relatives. In the *bīt redûti*, Ashurbanipal gained the wisdom of Nabû and the learning of the specialists; there he received his technical training in shooting arrows, horse-riding and chariotry. This culminated in a phrase existing only in this edition, which mentions kings and lions in the same context, reminding of the North Palace reliefs: "Among men, the kings and among beasts, the lions did not overtop my bow".<sup>204</sup> Lastly, he learned how to conduct a war.

The following section with his military achievements stands proof for the praise in the prologue. This is the first edition in which previous campaigns are completely omitted: Egypt 1, Qirbit, Medes, Urartu 1, Elam 1, the Babylonian rebellion and any episode concerning the Arabs. Those kept are mostly similarly conceived to Editions B and C, but greatly abbreviated. In exchange, Edition F introduces further details in the Elam 4 campaign, which is restructured, and also a completely new incursion in the territory of Elam – Elam 5. Thus, in all, the military efforts celebrated by Edition F are: I – Egypt 2; II – Tyre, Arwad 1 and 2, Tabal, Cilicia, and Lydia 1; III – Mannaeans; IV – Elam 2, Gambulu, Elam 3 (with a short mention of Šamaš-šumu-ukin); V – Elam 4; and VI – Elam 5. The focus seems to be on the last two affairs. They are both conducted explicitly against the Elamite king Ummanaldas. The first had as scope his removal from the Elamite throne (as well as other potential occupants) and the re-installment of Tammaritu II, who was brought along with the Assyrian troops. Thus, the attitude towards him is reshaped and there is no trace of his treacherous defection from Assyria to Elam, as it was the case in the previous Edition Kh, written just one year earlier. However, Tammaritu II turned against Assyria shortly after enthronement, the Assyrian gods decided his downfall, Tammaritu II was dethroned and for a second time he submitted to Ashurbanipal. The text keeps silent on his fate, moving further to the second

<sup>203</sup> Several exemplars of Edition F had their original date 18 erased and replaced with the date of 12, an auspicious day in connection to goddess Gula. Apparently, they were recovered from secondary contexts (filling of some edifice ground in Nineveh), but may have originally stemmed from a dumping of a scriptorium. This latter date is what would be taken over in the later Edition A, also celebrating the work on the North Palace. Borger, 1996: 15, 208 (F§2 I, 11) and Reade, 1986: 16.

<sup>204</sup> "ina a-me-lu-ti lugal-meš-š/ni ina ú-ma-mi//me la-ab-bu la i-ši-ih//š-hu ina pa-an// igi <sup>giš</sup>pan-ia". See Borger, 1996: 16, 209 (F§3, I 29-30).

march against Ummanaldas (suggesting it was probably him who dethroned Tammartu II). The account however loses track of Ummanaldas said simply to have fled to the mountains. The emphasis is actually on the minutely described destruction of Susa, the religious center of Elam, the looting of its rich palaces and temples, violation of sacred groves and desecration of the graves of past kings. It is rendered thus in terms of obliterating not only its present, but also its past. In the process, all the royal paraphernalia which the treacherous brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin had given in exchange for Elamite support against Assyria is recuperated, thus integrating this account within the complex situation of the generalized rebellion. The account insists on enumerating the goods of the Babylonian king. The Elamite temple profanation is counterbalanced by the next main episode of the campaign, shaped as the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. From old times it had been decided by the gods that Ashurbanipal, whom they called for kingship, would return the Akkadian goddess (Nanaya), who left Uruk for Elam in the ancient times, back to her abode, because the wicked Elam would no longer be a suitable home for her. Rich spoils of war are also emphasized and their pouring in Assyria – enemies and riches are presented to the gods, soldiers are enrolled in the Assyrian army and captives are given to the Assyrian officials like sheep.

Thus, his divine selection to shepherd-ship and kingship from faraway times from the apologetic introduction has a correspondent in Ashurbanipal's role in fulfilling an ancient prophecy. It was only natural that a smooth process for his ascension to the throne took place, that he gained knowledge and military skills and that the gods protected and supported all his actions. Those opposing his rightful rulership would only meet the gods' anger and have their names and seed destroyed from the land, as vividly illustrated by the Susa episode and desecration of the old king's burials and as provided by the curses in the loyalty oaths.<sup>205</sup> His rightfully conducted kingship would only lead to military success and riches flowing in Assyria, now epitomized by the spoils from Elam and especially Susa. In this context then follows the building account of the North Palace. The part reserved for the celebrated construction project is longer than usual and differs in several respects from the pattern of the previous editions. It returns to the *bīt redūti* mentioned in the introduction, but this time with reference to a physical building. At this point, the text entwines the common mention of the old edifice and the predecessors (his father and grandfather) who worked on it with a sequence of Ashurbanipal's titles (stating the universality of his kingship, as in the prologue

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<sup>205</sup> "May Zarpanitu, who grants name and seed, destroy your name and your seed from the land" – curse upon those who break the loyalty oath made by Esarhaddon for Ashurbanipal. Starr, 1990: 46 (45).

of earlier editions), a detailed sequence of the reasons leading to the construction of the *bīt redūti* as his royal dwelling (the flow of the dynastic line taking place there under the protection of the gods) and the precious embellishments he provided the construction with.

**Prism T**,<sup>206</sup> although found buried at the door of the Nabû temple at Nineveh,<sup>207</sup> celebrated in fact the building of the *akitu* temple of Ishtar at Nineveh. It was written the same year with Edition F and recounted only the Elam 5 affair, omitting the destruction of Susa and the desecration of its temples, stressing only the return of the goddess Nanaya to Uruk as Ashurbanipal's fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. However, the text does not contain any apologetic introduction, having instead the prologue of the previous Edition C, with the universalist titles, divine selection before he was even born and the emphasis on the king's righteous priesthood and temple building activities. It adds even more temples worked on than Edition C (including in Der and Nineveh). Ashurbanipal continued the work of his father Esarhaddon, the text stresses. Dedicated to a temple building project and buried in a temple precinct, Edition T omitted the temple defile in Susa from the military account, but stressed the religious role of Ashurbanipal and his acting as tool of the gods in returning goddess Nanaya to her home (in same wording as in Edition F).

**Edition A**<sup>208</sup> is dated to 643, during the eponym Shamash-da''innani of Babylon.<sup>209</sup> Exemplars of this edition were found *in situ* in the walls of the North Palace (see Introduction). The text follows largely Edition F, but brings more clarity in the development of several previous campaigns. The introductory apologetic part is similar, with few differences. It adds a short sequence stating Ashurbanipal's rightful kingship (following his training as crown prince): his divinely appointed task to take care of the sanctuaries and the gods bringing the enemies under his sway for him. This is followed by signs of plenty provided by the gods during his reign (similar to the wording of Edition B). It then recounts the military achievements, the largest amount of such events (gathered in nine *girrus*): I-II – Egypt 1 and Egypt 2; III – Tyre, Arwad 1, Tabal, Cilicia, Arwad 2, Lydia 1, 2 and 3; IV – Mannaeans; V – Elam 2 (Teumman's death and Ummanigaš' installation in his place),

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<sup>206</sup> Borger, 1996: 92-94, 137-147, 167-172, 206-208, 239, 254-255.

<sup>207</sup> According to its publisher, it was found in fragments beneath the flooring of the South-East door of the temple of Nabû at Nineveh. See Thompson, 1931: 29.

<sup>208</sup> Borger, 1996: 14-76, 208-209, 212-215, 216-217, 218-219, 220-221, 226, 228, 232-235, 237-243, 245-250, 255-257.

<sup>209</sup> Gerardi, 1987: 72.



Gambulu and the beginning of the Babylonian rebellion; VI – the defeat of the Babylonian rebellion and Elam 3; VII – Elam 4; VIII – Elam 5; IX – Arabs 1, Arabs 2, Arabs 3 and Arabs 4 followed by accounts of Elam 6 and Urartu 3. Edition A still omits Elam 1 (against Urtaki), Qirbit and the Medes, but it contains new entries in various *girrus*: Lydia 2, Arabs 3, Elam 6 and Urartu 3. It reintroduces the first Egyptian campaign (similar as in Edition C) and the Babylonian rebellion, both omitted by Edition F. The Lydian affair in the 3<sup>rd</sup> *girru* is completed with Gyges' betrayal and help given to Psammetichus of Egypt to throw off of the Assyrian yoke (Lydia 2), Gyges' death and his son returning to an allegiance with Assyria (Lydia 3). While introducing in minimalistic terms the loss of Egypt, the text stresses instead the punishment the gods inflicted upon Gyges for breaking his loyalty oath. The punishment is a fulfillment of the prayer addressed by Ashurbanipal to the great gods, who delivered Gyges in the hands of his enemies, the Cimmerians, against whom he swore allegiance to Ashurbanipal in the first place. All the more since Assur himself had revealed in a dream to Gyges that Ashurbanipal was the solution against the Cimmerians. The loss of Egypt was just a blurred background against which the important message was carved. Gyges' defeat by the Cimmerians was an exemplary statement of the divine curses reaching those who break the oaths to the Assyrian king, their favorite; it was thus exploited and adapted by the royal rhetoric to emphasize a positive image for Ashurbanipal, although Egypt was lost. Gyges' son understood the cause of his father's death and submitted immediately to the Assyrian king. All these events were kept silent in the previous editions, but once the new king of Lydia submitted, they were brought into the text and shaped to fit the Assyrian ideology of an always victorious king and the downfall of those who betray him. No changes were made in the Egyptian campaigns proper, which still occupied the first position among Ashurbanipal's military achievements.

More reconfigurations appear concerning the campaigns against Teumman and Dunnanu the Gambulean; they were rendered as two subsequent episodes of a single *girru* and conceived in an abbreviated form (just as in Edition F), with no information on exemplary punishments. However, Edition A attaches to these events and stresses the beginning of the Babylonian rebellion, which is given considerable space. Events previously portrayed as separated episodes are now explicitly rendered as a continuum. It is now more than in the previous editions implied that the treads of a generalized rebellion were already taking shape before Šamaš-šumu-ukin's involvement. "At that time" Šamaš-šumu-ukin started planning

evil: outwardly he spoke fair, but he planned murder.<sup>210</sup> He stirred Assyrian subjects into enemies: the various inhabitants of Babylonia, as well as a series of kings Ashurbanipal had set on their thrones “with his own hands”. Among them was the Elamite Ummanigaš, the refugee at the Nineveh court, brought along in the campaign against Teumman and installed in the latter’s place after his beheading. Interestingly, the king of Meluhha (Ethiopia) is also mentioned as having been stirred up by Šamaš-šumu-ukin, suggesting Egypt was also involved in the great rebellion, information not mentioned anywhere else. The emphasis in this account is on Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s position on the Babylonian throne, suggesting that its direct source was Ashurbanipal himself; secondly, it stresses Ashurbanipal outdoing the prescriptions set by their father concerning Šamaš-šumu-ukin, having provided him with more royal insignia and riches than actually required by Esarhaddon. Thus, Ashurbanipal not only fulfilled all his duties, but exceeded them. His generosity is contrasted then with Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s treacherous behavior, who closed the gates of the cities and denied Ashurbanipal access to perform his royal and priestly duties in the Babylonian temples. This must be seen in connection to the prologue, which, compared to Edition F, added Ashurbanipal’s divinely appointed task to care for the sanctuaries. As such, Šamaš-šumu-ukin simply put himself against a divine command by denying Ashurbanipal access to the Babylonian temples. More so, a further aspect is introduced in the description of this *girru* – the motive of a seer’s vision foretelling a terrible death by iron dagger, fire, or famine and pestilence upon whoever plans evil against Ashurbanipal.<sup>211</sup> The following *girru* is the fulfillment of the vision. The defeat of Šamaš-šumu-ukin is intertwined with the Elam 3 affair (6<sup>th</sup> *girru*), as the succeeding kings on the Elamite throne sided with Šamaš-šumu-ukin during the rebellion. This *girru* received considerable space as well and introduced previously unknown details. No account of an actual fight is given, the focus being on the fulfillment of the vision: the treacherous Elamite king Ummanigaš was slain with the sword by an usurper; the Babylonian cities were devastated by famine and pest and Šamaš-šumu-ukin was cast by the gods to the fire and his

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<sup>210</sup> Borger, 1996: 39, 233 (A§32, III 81). For *nirtu* as “murder”, see CAD/ N2: 177 (*nērtu*).

<sup>211</sup> It is the second time the motive of a seer and a vision is introduced in Ashurbanipal’s annals. It appears first in Edition B (and taken over in C) in the Elam 2 account; Ištar assures the Assyrians she would lead the battle against Teumman, when a report is received that the Elamite king is gathering troops. See a discussion on it in Gerardi, 1987: 146-150. The author argues that the inclusion of dreams and omens in this military affair, a novelty of Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions, was used in order to introduce a novel practice – a direct intervention on the throne of a foreign, independent state through the slaying of Teumman and installment of Ummanigaš (refugee prince at Nineveh) in his place.

soul was consumed. The construction emphasizes Ashurbanipal's role as the tool in fulfilling divine commands. A hint is given of a whole party organized around Šamaš-šumu-ukin, which "caused him to plot" all his evil actions (*ušakpidu* – Š-stem, Pret. of *kapadum*, rendering a causative meaning of "to plot").<sup>212</sup> They are said to be soldiers, offenders of Assur and Ashurbanipal. None of them escaped, and they had their tongues cut off. The palace of Šamaš-šumu-ukin was looted, but the description is less detailed than in Edition C. Interestingly, the survivors of these ordeals were slain amid protective figures of colossi as offerings to the shade of Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal's grandfather, on the same spot where he was cut down. Their remains were scattered and fed to the animals. Although the full implications of this entry elude us, it is interesting to note that two family dramas are brought into the same picture and arranged against a setting of rebellion involving Babylon and Elam. It has been suggested that Sennacherib was mentioned in this context as an evocation of his terrible destruction of Babylon to quell a rebellion.<sup>213</sup> However, it is hard to imagine such sarcasm would have been welcomed at that time on the part of Ashurbanipal.<sup>214</sup> The prologue of Edition A actually praises his rightful priesthood and his care for the temples both in Assyria and Babylonia and throughout the text the blame for the devastating war is put on Šamaš-šumu-ukin forbidding him to perform his royal and priestly duties in Babylonia. Besides, it is the murder of Sennacherib that is mentioned in Edition A, not the destruction of Babylon, and this is known to have been done by Sennacherib's own son(s) for succession issues.<sup>215</sup> The build-up of Edition A suggests that the murder may have taken place in

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<sup>212</sup> Borger, 1996: 44 (A§40, IV 54). See CAD/ K: 174 (5).

<sup>213</sup> Frame, 1992: 156. Sennacherib had to face similar political affairs, with a rebellious Babylon (claimed by the Chaldean Merodach-Baladan II) supported by Akkadian cities, Chaldean and Aramean tribes, Elam and Arabs. The situation turned complicated after his son enthroned in Babylon was betrayed by the Babylonians and captured by the Elamites in 694 BC, and culminated in Sennacherib's devastation of Babylon in 689 BC (his 16<sup>th</sup> year of reign) and his assuming direct control of Babylonia afterwards. He took no titles regarding Babylonia and did not undertake construction projects there, therefore the exact nature of this state of affairs is not known. See Sennacherib's relationships with Babylonia in RINAP 3/1 (Introduction, 11-14) and Frame, 1992: 52-63.

<sup>214</sup> Esarhaddon kept complete silence on Sennacherib's destruction of Babylonian temples and distanced himself from this policy, undertaking massive construction projects in Babylonia. Ashurbanipal emphasizes in his inscriptions his position of continuator of his father's building work, including in Babylon. Building accounts written after the rebellion record work in both Assyria and Babylonia.

<sup>215</sup> Parpola, 1980. See the entry of Sennacherib's murder by his son in one Babylonian chronicle in Grayson, 1975: 81 (34-37).

Babylonia and thus may have had something to do with Babylonian and Elamite interests. A previous passage may indicate that Babylonian parties were held responsible for arousing Šamaš-šumu-ukin against Ashurbanipal and “cause him to plot” his evil deeds. The reference may bore other implications as well – murder within the royal family by close family members. When introducing the beginning of the rebellion, the text mentioned Šamaš-šumu-ukin planning murder in his heart (*nirtu*), while openly speaking fairly. He may have thus been equaled with the murderer(s) of Sennacherib. It is hard to know which implications of the past tragedy were considered in the text, given that, in the end, Ashurbanipal had caused the death of his own “equal brother”. There is no evidence of how the event was seen at the time (Esarhaddon had never mentioned his father’s murder in his inscriptions). What remains is that Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s rebellion and death were presented against an image of Ashurbanipal as avenger of their grandfather’s murder, although the part with family members is never mentioned, but instead a connection with treacherous Babylonians is implied. This was done in the context of an autobiographical inscription with an emphasis on the dynastic line, commissioned for the building of a palace with an alleged history of accommodating the royal succession process.

In complete circle with the prologue stating his divinely appointed task of carrying for the sanctuaries and Šamaš-šumu-ukin preventing him to do so in Babylonia, the conclusion of the Babylonian affair has Ashurbanipal re-establishing the revenues for the temples, undertaking his priestly functions in purifying the shrines and streets and appeasing the angry hearts of the gods.

Another highlight of Edition A is the second campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 5), which is now completed with further information. Military charisma and dream messages from the gods are intertwined in the account. The troops became frightened when reaching a river (although this was not the case in Edition F). Goddess Ištar appeared in the soldiers’ dream assuring them she would walk in front of the king.<sup>216</sup> This of course, added further weight to the devastation of Susa and its temples and the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy concerning goddess Nanaya. Because Edition A was composed in order to introduce the fact that the leaders of the rebellion were completely eliminated, omens and prophecies added emphasis to these achievements. They worked as literary devices for emphasizing Ashurbanipal’s special destiny, which fulfilled and followed divine commands. This comes

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<sup>216</sup> On the dream account, see Gerardi, 1987: 206-207.

in line with the overall idea of the inscription, which shapes and insists on justifying Ashurbanipal's actions as pious answers to divine orders. The dramatic devastation of Susa, even though it included violation of temples, would soon show its effects. The main threat and the purpose of both invasions of Elam during Ummanaldas is finally revealed – the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate committed suicide. The text insists on punishments inflicted upon his corpse, which was deprived of burial. His head was cut-off and hang to the neck of his brother, a loyal subject of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, who facilitated Elamite support. Furthermore, overwhelmed by fear, another Elamite king Pa'e (a concurrent of Ummanaldas?) submitted to Ashurbanipal, as did many Elamite fugitives which in the end were integrated into the Assyrian army.

The Arab affairs are a *girru* in its own and contains all the Arab encounters from Arabs 1 (chronologically shortly preceding the Babylonian rebellion) through Arabs 2 (during the Šamaš-šumu-ukin uprising) and Arabs 3 and 4 (after the Šamaš-šumu-ukin uprising). The later events are introduced as the corollary of all the Arabian encounters and the older events (Arabs 1) are reworked in order to fit the narrative thread and function as the prerequisites of the new entries. The narration transpires the effort of integrating all these events in connection to the Babylonian rebellion, which at times results in confusion.<sup>217</sup> The tendency of viewing even the first encounter with the Arabs (Arabs 1) in connection to the Babylonian rebellion, even if it actually took place shortly before the rebellion had started, was already present in the arrangement of Edition B, written during the Babylonian war. In Edition B, it must be remembered, Arabs 1 was part of the same *girru* with Gambulu (also technically preceding the Babylonian rebellion) and Elam 3 (the succession of Elamite kings Ummanigaš, Tammaritu II and Indabibi, who initially submitted to Ashurbanipal only to later supported Šamaš-šumu-ukin).<sup>218</sup> Edition G also showed this tendency when it introduced the episode with the capture of the Arab queen Adija (Arabs 3) in direct connection and immediately following Arabs 1. These tendencies suggest a continuous and longer state of tensions with rebellious potential. Like in the Elam 3 case, when the Elamite kings set on

<sup>217</sup> For their desambiguation, see Eph'al, 1982: 142-169. For a discussion on the editorial process of the Arab campaigns in Ashurbanipal's annals, see Gerardi, 1992. Further desambiguation is brought in by a study of J. Novotny, who ascribes a different dating for the capture of the Arabian queen Adija, after and not before the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion. Novotny, 2008: 133.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Gerardi, 1992: 88, who considers that Arabs 1 was associated to the Babylonian rebellion only in later annalistic texts and this only due to scribal error and confusion about identity of characters with the same name (Yauta/ Uaite).

their thrones with Assyrian support joined the cause of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Arab leaders (Abiyate set as king by Ashurbanipal) joined the rebellious brother. The same figures were involved in all these episodes, with rebels from earlier campaign still at large and active during the later ones. While Yauta, son of Hazael, rebelled but managed to escape before the Babylonian uprising (Arabs 1), he was captured during the Babylonian war and executed (during Arabs 2), but his wife, queen Adija was still at large and apparently with an important role. She was captured only very shortly after the defeat of Babylon (Arabs 3). Abiyate became king and Assyrian subject after the defeat of Yauta, before the Babylonian uprising (Arabs 1), but soon turned against Assyria and supported Šamaš-šumu-ukin (Arabs 2), managed to avoid capture and was still at large after the quell of the rebellion. Still posing a threat, he later took part in an Arab rebellion against Ashurbanipal and only then captured and killed (Arabs 4). A certain Arab leader Ouaite, son of Birdada, joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin (Arabs 2), remained free and took part in the later Arab rebellion (Arabs 4), before being caught and brought to Nineveh. This continuous process of enclosing new military affairs in the Babylonian rebellion suggest that the Babylonian uprising was the generator of the whole second wave of annalistic issues. Edition A has Ashurbanipal directly involved in all the military campaigns against the Arabs, including those which previously were put on the account of the border troops and Assyrian vassals.

After the Arab affair, part of the same *girru*, Edition A introduces the Elam 6 episode concerning the capture of the last enemy of Ashurbanipal. As a corollary of Ashurbanipal's divinely established kingship since far away times, the gods decided Ummanaldas' downfall in an internal uprising, his fleeing and capture by the Assyrian king. All credit for Ummanaldas' capture is assumed by the king himself. The emphasis on his priesthood from the prologue finds its correspondent in the conclusion of all his military affairs. Three captured Elamite kings, Tammartu II, Pa'e and Ummanaldas, together with the captured Arab king Ouaite were forced to carry Ashurbanipal's carriage into a ceremonial performed in front of the troops on the occasion of the *akitu* festival at Nineveh. The last *girru* of Edition A has a circular construction. It starts with a metaphorical reference to Yauta, son of Hazael, throwing off the yoke that Assur had established for him to pull at Ashurbanipal's chariot, only to end with a very literal rendering of another Arab leader, Ouaite, son of Birdada, forced to carry Ashurbanipal's chair in procession. The echo of his bitter war and triumph over his enemies is further underlined by the introduction of the Urartian king who willingly submitted and brought gifts (Urartu 3).

Like Edition F, Edition A commemorated the construction of the *bīt redûti*, being the second inscription recounting this project and the last (known). This section of the text is identical, apart for few details, to Edition F. In line with its military content, it brings in addition the mentioning of forced Elamite and Arabian contributions to the building proper of the palace.

The royal image rendered by Edition A stresses rather Ashurbanipal's rightful priesthood, which is first set in the prologue as established by the gods ever since old times, is used as justification for and background against the Babylonian war and his brother's death (he stood in the way of his performing his priestly duties, but Babylon is cleansed with rituals and prayer and the cultic matters reestablished after the war) and it closes the circle in the conclusion of all his military affairs, when his captured foes are made to actually support the yoke of his couch in the *akitu* procession.

### 3.4. Last wave of annalistic editions

Four years later another stream of annalistic compositions occurred. There are three representatives of this last known wave: **Edition H**,<sup>219</sup> written in Neo-Babylonian script, recovered from Babylon and thus obviously addressing a Babylonian audience; **Edition J**,<sup>220</sup> the counterpart of Edition H in Neo-Assyrian script, and the inscription displayed on stone slabs in the temple of Ištar at Nineveh (the **Ištar temple inscription**).<sup>221</sup> The first two texts are very fragmentary, but the preserved fragments correspond to the Ištar temple inscription, which is most complete. Edition H is the only one preserving a date, in the Babylonian fashion, according to Ashurbanipal's 30<sup>th</sup> regnal year – 639 BC. If similarity of text is an indicator, the other two editions may have been issued the same year, for different building projects, or around that time. Edition H does not preserve the prologue, but Edition J does. It states the name, titles and epithets of the king, similarly to the earlier editions (stressing the universality of Ashurbanipal's rule), but introduces several aspects: Babylonian gods Marduk and his spouse Zarpanitu are added right after the divine couple Assur and Mulissu in the series of gods who favored Ashurbanipal. He calls himself an experienced governor and

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<sup>219</sup> Borger, 1996: 189-193, 210, 215, 217, 222, 223, 226, 228, 232, 250, 257.

<sup>220</sup> Borger, 1996: 193-197, 209-210, 217, 222, 250-251, 257.

<sup>221</sup> Borger, 1996: 264-296.

shepherd guiding numerous people.<sup>222</sup> The genealogical line extends to Sargon II, his grand-grandfather. Other titles and epithets follow: he is governor of Babylon and king of Sumer and Akkad, care-taker of temples, the one who restored order in the offering regulations and arduous worshipper of the gods. It continues with his divine election to kingship even before his birth and his priesthood on the gods' liking. This is further mirrored in the gods fighting and defeating his enemies for him and in his work on a series of temples in Babylonia (starting with embellishments for the abodes of Marduk and Zarpanitu). Their detailed description meets the identical rendering preserved in Edition H (and partly in the earlier Edition C).<sup>223</sup> On its part, the Ištar temple inscription starts with an exaltation of goddess Ishtar, proceeds with Ashurbanipal's titles and epithets (similar to Edition J), continues with a long, detailed list of temple building and furnishings, both in Assyria (first rendered in the account) and Babylonia (some of the latter preserved also in Editions H and J). The editions then list the military victories.

All three editions render much abbreviated military accounts, not gathered in *girrus*, but enumerated one after another. A geographical arrangement seems to be followed and in at least one case a thematic one. They introduce new political events, conceived mostly as willing submissions triggered by the echoes of the devastating wars against Elam; these new entries are treated briefly as well (the most complete list of them is preserved in the Ištar inscription). What the military section does insist on is the defeat of Tugdamu, a Cimmerian king (not preserved in Edition H, fragmentary in Edition J and better preserved in the Ištar inscription). The account about Tabal, previously rendered among the first *girrus*, within the series of events in Anatolia and the Seacoast, is now rendered at the end of the enumeration because its later story is intertwined with that of Tugdammu, the spotlight of the military encounters. The defeat of Tugdammu, described as *zer halqati* ("seed of destruction") and arrogant Gutean meant actually two divine interventions of the great gods (a long list is given and only Assyrian gods are preserved on the part of Ashurbanipal without any battle proper – fire from the sky scattered the Cimmerian camp during the first attempt of attack and an

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<sup>222</sup> Borger, 1996: 193-194, 209 (§1).

<sup>223</sup> Borger, 1996: 139-140, 206, 210 (C§5, I 38-48). This may imply that reference to Ashurbanipal's work on the Babylonian temples previous to the Babylonian rebellion is referred to, together with the work after his taking direct control over it after the defeat of Babylon. At all times, the royal rhetoric implies, Ashurbanipal was a caretaker of the temples and servant of the Babylonian gods.



illness consumed and finally killed Tugdammu after his break of the oath.<sup>224</sup> The Tugdammu matter also appears accounted in a dedicatory inscription on an altar in the temple of Marduk at Babylon (in Neo-Babylonian script).<sup>225</sup> In direct connection to the audience addressed in that instance (Babylonians), Tugdammu, whose defeat and demise was attributed now to Marduk, was defined in the likeness of a *gallû*-demon,<sup>226</sup> king of the *Ummān-manda* and offspring of Tiamat, all expressions alluding to the demon army of Tiamat in the Enuma Eliš composition – the account of Marduk’s becoming king of the gods after destroying Tiamat and her armies.<sup>227</sup> We may wonder if the now lost account about Tugdammu in Edition H would have been rather similar to the one rendered by the dedication to Marduk, framing it in terms appealing to the locals, given that the audience of Edition H was also Babylonian.<sup>228</sup> Even if these last editions were not completely identical (given that we don’t know how the Tugdammu account was rendered in Edition H) what they certainly have in common is the emphasis of Ashurbanipal’s building projects. As king of Assyria as well as governor of Babylon and king of Summer and Akkad,<sup>229</sup> Ashurbanipal’s royal image in these last editions was rendered more in the fashion of a traditional Babylonian ruler – a builder (of temples) king. His divine election and predestination for kingship was determined by Assur and Marduk together, the great gods of Assyria and Babylon and this was the framing used in

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<sup>224</sup> S. F. Adali pointed to the similarity of this narrative development and the epithets used to describe Tugdammu with the “Cuthean Legend”, where the swarming enemies (Guteans) of the Akkadian king Naram-Sin were annihilated by the gods, who ordered the king not to intervene. Adali, 2013: 590-591. However, the legend tells that the Guteans functioned as tool for the gods to punish or test Naram-Sin for his *hybris* of trusting his own power (a version which is known from Ashurbanipal’s library as well). It’s hard to imagine that such allusions were implied in Ashurbanipal’s inscriptions, given that they actually glorify his defilement of temples in Susa and his war in Babylon, but always under the protection of his claims of piety and fulfillment of divine commands. Unless the only information that counted was the outcome of the gods’ final intervention in the king’s favor.

<sup>225</sup> Borger, 1996: 201-203 and its translation in Luckenbill, 1927: 384-386 (999-1006).

<sup>226</sup> The Elamite king Teumman was also described as in the likeness of a *gallû-demon* in Editions B, D and C. Borger, 1996: 97 (B§30, IV 74). Like Tugdammu, Teumman too is stroke with an illness by the gods (but does not die).

<sup>227</sup> Adali, 2013: 590.

<sup>228</sup> If so, we may wonder if, while Enuma Eliš served to frame the Cimmerian threat and its resolution for a Babylonian audience, the Cuthean Legend was more at hand for an Assyrian one.

<sup>229</sup> A certain Kandalanu (“Shaped like a *kandalu*-utensil”) was appointed in Babylon sometime after the rebellion to look after Assyrian interests, but evidence shows his powers and attributions were only formal. See Frame, 1992: 195.

inscriptions addressing an Assyrian audience (Edition J and Ištar temple inscription). In accordance with this prologue (not preserved in Edition H) stressing Ashurbanipal's righteous priesthood and piety, the Cimmerian invasion is solved by the intervention of the gods, defeating the enemy for Ashurbanipal, with no military intervention required. While the build-up of the account would be the same, the details may have been different according to an Assyrian or Babylonian audience. For sure the details of Edition J and the Ištar temple inscription, both from Nineveh, stress first the building programs on temples in Assyria, followed by those in Babylonia, present the Assyrian gods as those who destroyed Tugdammu and have the latter praising Assur's might as he died. It may be that Edition H (like the inscription dedicated to Marduk and concerned with Tugdammu) made use of arguments more appealing to a Babylonian audience (but this remains speculative). As both king of Assyria and Babylonia at the time the latest annals were written, the uprising of Šamaš-šumu-ukin with the bitter war inflicted upon the Babylonian cities and their inhabitants did not become subject for the annals anymore. Consequently, it is the devastation of Elam and not Babylon which is underlined and portrayed as the generator of willing submissions of faraway kings.

The celebrated construction project is not preserved in Edition H and although its fragments come from Babylon, no information is recorded about their finding spots. In Edition J the construction project was the *akitu* temple of Enlil, but its location is not mentioned. At least one fragment of this edition comes certainly from Kuyunjik, but with no recorded finding spot.<sup>230</sup> The fact that Edition J was written on a prism, means it did not serve as an archival copy of Edition H, but was conceived as foundation deposit for a construction proper. The Ištar temple inscription was meant to be seen inside the temple proper.

To summarize, there are three waves during which annalistic texts were issued in connection to building projects. Each emphasized and tried to explain a certain political context, suggesting it was that precise political tension that generated both the building program and the commissioning of the annals. These challenges appeared at three stages in Ashurbanipal's reign: at the beginning of his reign; starting with his 15<sup>th</sup> year of reign, when the largest amount of annalistic editions were issued; and in his 30<sup>th</sup> year of reign. For each such situation a different royal image was emphasized over others, drawing on a pool of possibilities and configuring them in various ways. The literary devices for framing the

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<sup>230</sup> Thompson, 1940: 85, 109 (No. 36, BM 121027).

information also varied –lengthy military affairs enumerated one after another and separated by a line in the first wave; military affairs sharing various features grouped in *girru* arrangements in the second wave; and again enumeration of campaigns one after another, but very briefly and without separating line in the last wave. Concerning the second case, the configurations of *girrus* varied from one edition to the other, in the attempt to explain complex and interconnected political situations spanning on a long period of time. In no case was there a chronological aim, but rather a thematic focus.

Ashurbanipal's editions of the annals had the first issues early in his reign (666 BC), with an apologetic introduction emphasizing his appointment as crown prince and recounting the sources of legitimization for his position on the Assyrian throne. Emphasis in this sense was on Ashurbanipal's excellent learning skills and wisdom, already signs of his endowment with divine favors, which recommended him as suitable for kingship. These editions were issued only after a military affair in rebellious Egypt, presented as victory. It has been argued that these early editions should be understood in connection to Esarhaddon's death during a march against Egypt (although due to illness), which may have had its potential of tensions and leave room for contesting his succession arrangements and thus Ashurbanipal's position. The victory against Egypt was built as a re-installment of Esarhaddon's order and Ashurbanipal being a natural continuator of his father's work; this strengthened Esarhaddon's image as successful conqueror and his own as his rightful heir. The king's warrior skills (as he did not take part in the battles proper) and his righteous shepherd-ship mirrored themselves in successful hunt of wild lions threatening his subjects, followed by his priestly performances for the *akitu* ceremonial (connected to military triumph). The literary build-up for this case was a linear enumeration of military affairs, with a stress on Egypt, positioned first in the series, in order to strengthen Esarhaddon's succession arrangements and Ashurbanipal's position as his heir. The following accounts, also introduced at length were the proof of his divine support in military victory, successful hunt and signs from gods which brought foreign kings to him in willing submission. A Babylonian audience may have also been involved, as the introduction connected his learning yore to Babylonian gods of wisdom and skills.

Only much later in his reign (15<sup>th</sup> year) were the next issues of annals commissioned; this time they were written in a cascade, starting from 649 BC to 643 BC, at times with two issues in the same year (as in 646 BC, with Editions Kh and G, or in 645 BC, with Editions F and T). They were composed against the background of the great Babylonian rebellion (652 BC-

648 BC) led by Ashurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin and its follow-up episodes after the latter's demise: until the death of the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate (645 BC), the capture of the Elamite king Ummanaldas (645/ 644 BC) and of the Arab leaders supporting the Babylonian insurrection (645/ 644 BC). They stressed Ashurbanipal's priesthood on the gods' liking and his kingship in connection to temple building (for both Assyrian and Babylonian gods); this duty was established for him long before he was born. His acting as tool of the gods was underlined by introduction of omens, dreams and theophany and their fulfillment. Introduced subsequently to the conclusion of the events, they would have nevertheless aimed to confirm to the audience that the outcome was the effect of predetermined and favorable acts commanded by the gods. The last of these editions (F and A, written at a distance of two years from one another), with a stress on the events following the defeat and death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, contain an apologetic prologue, again underlining Ashurbanipal's appointment as heir, but configured differently from his first annalistic editions. Emphasis is put now on his being the legitimate and successful continuator of a dynastic line, rather than on his personal skills (of learning and military). Edition A adds to the dynastic line motive of Edition F a further aspect – it reintroduces Ashurbanipal's righteous priesthood in the prologue, and divine signs of omens and prophecy in the military accounts. The rich flow of editorial process at this time shows that the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and the connected episodes were the generator of this cascade of annalistic inscriptions. Efforts in trying to integrate all its complexities and adapt them to a glorifying royal rhetoric are visible. It is in connection to these efforts of explaining such complexities that *girru* arrangements were used.

A third wave of issuing annalistic texts came not long afterwards in Ashurbanipal's 30<sup>th</sup> year of reign (in 639 BC), with new military entries, but much abbreviated in form. The only detailed account was the elimination of the Cimmerians threat, on the verge of invading Assyria. This was thus the generator of this wave of annalistic inscriptions. The royal image proposed by these last editions is determined by Ashurbanipal's position at the time – king of both Assyria and Babylonia, addressing both audiences. It draws greatly on the image of the traditional Babylonian ruler, emphasizing his image as builder-king and minimizing the bellicose aspect – the military encounters are all brief. The war against Šamaš-šumu-ukin is also briefly dismissed. Instead, divine intervention which slays his enemies is introduced. Again the military section is a linear enumeration, insisting this time on the last account (the Cimmerians), which offered him suitable setting for presenting himself as Assyrian and

Babylonian king. It may be just the state of the surviving evidence, but apparently this last wave of Editions was connected only to temple building projects.

#### IV. Royal representations in epigraph collections

About 21 fragmentary tablets recovered from Nineveh, with no specific finding spot recorded, contained lists of epigraphs, with the entries separated from one another by simple horizontal lines; on some tablets they are organized in columns. They are collections of texts of the type found in the reliefs of Room 33 in the Southwest Palace and in the reliefs of the North Palace. They are concerned with only a part of the military affairs of Ashurbanipal.

Two thematic series were identified in these collections, each one treating several military affairs:<sup>231</sup> 1) Some tablets contain collections of epigraphs concerned with the Teumman – Dunnanu military encounters (10 fragmentary tablets); they are concerned thus with the Elam 2 and Gambulu campaigns, from Ashurbanipal's earlier years. 2) The other tablets listed epigraphs concerned with the punishment of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's allies, the submission of the Elamite king Tammaritu II (also former ally of Šamaš-šumu-ukin) and the capture of the Arab queen Adija and the Arab leader Ammuladi (in all, 11 very fragmentary tablets). The latter series was thus concerned with the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion, the Elam 3 affairs (mostly Tammaritu II) and Arabs 1 and Arabs 3 campaigns.

The two thematic series never occur intertwined on the same tablet. The military affairs considered by the collections on tablets were also represented in Ashurbanipal's palatial reliefs: the theme of the first cycle is represented in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace and in Room I of the North Palace, while the campaigns in the second cycle (Šamaš-šumu-ukin – Tammaritu II – Arabs) were rendered in various spaces of the North Palace, as will become apparent in the chapters discussing the reliefs. Seven epigraphs of the first cycle (Teumman-Dunnanu) appear in Ashurbanipal's reliefs in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace and one in Room I of the North Palace. From the second series only one epigraph appears as caption in a relief – in a scene of the throne room M in the North Palace.

The Teumman – Dunnanu cycle received more interest and was provided a thorough analysis by M. J. Russell.<sup>232</sup> He noticed that this series displays a number of variations in the configurations of epigraphs on the tablets. The high number of epigraphs which never occur in the reliefs proper suggests that the epigraph collections did not function as lists of captions

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<sup>231</sup> They were first published and translated by Weidner, who classified them in two cycles, according to their subject matter. Weidner, 1932-33.

<sup>232</sup> Reade, 1979 (c): 99-101; Gerardi, 1982; and especially Russell, 1999: 158-199.

to be inserted in the reliefs or copied after them. Their analysis has led to the conclusion that they represent most likely drafts of various stages preceding the realization of Ashurbanipal's reliefs in Room 33 and Room I of the North Palace (and perhaps other palatial spaces decorated by Ashurbanipal), some lists being closer to the visual renderings in the reliefs and others more distanced, according to the stages of the process.<sup>233</sup> Judging by the quantity of such intermediary lists, there was quite a number of proposals, rejections and readjustments in shaping the royal image in connection to the Teumman – Dunnanu affairs in the reliefs.

The second series of collections did not receive the same attention in the literature. While one text of the first cycle states in the colophon that it was a copy of a tablet read to the king, colophons of texts belonging to the second series directly connect their purpose to the North Palace reliefs, mentioning the walls of the *bīt redûti*.<sup>234</sup> Therefore, this second cycle is of great interest for the understanding of the royal representations in the North Palace.

This chapter seeks to grasp the royal representations rendered by the collections of epigraphs. According to the subject matters of the collections, the chapter is divided in two parts. In the first part it briefly introduces the collections concerned with the Teumman – Dunnanu cycle and the royal image conveyed by them. In the second part it presents and discusses the material of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin – Tammaritu II – Arabs cycle and the royal representations conveyed by it. The relationship between the royal image shaped by the collections of epigraphs with the royal exploits they render and their counterparts in the previously discussed annalistic texts is also investigated. Their relationship with the reliefs which were finally displayed on the palatial walls is suggested briefly here as the reliefs proper will be introduced and discussed only in the following chapters.

#### **4.1. The Teumman – Dunnanu series**

Around 10 tablets of this series contain epigraphs with references to the military campaign against the Elamite king Teumman and the Gambulean king Dunnanu, his ally. They rendered 8 texts, labeled as A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H.<sup>235</sup> The whole thematic series

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<sup>233</sup> Russell, 1999: 187-205.

<sup>234</sup> See Weidner, 1932-33: 186-187, 200-201.

<sup>235</sup> See texts in Borger, 1996: 299-307 and translations in Weidner, 1932-33: 178-191 and Russell, 1999: 158-164. See the tablet fragments of the texts in Russell, 1999: 157.

contained around 50 epigraphs.<sup>236</sup> Some lists present a different order of epigraphs, some omit certain entries and others present variations for one or another epigraph. As already mentioned, this cycle was analyzed and discussed by scholar J. M. Russell. A close reading of the collections of this cycle showed that some had their epigraphs arranged chronologically, while others seem to have been arranged rather thematically, covering several stories. In the latter case one narrative thread was followed until its end before turning to another story, even if their episodes would actually overlap chronologically.<sup>237</sup>

**Text A** is the most complete and has the greatest number of entries (with 37 epigraphs in total). It is the only one of this series containing a colophon; it states that the text was a “copy of a tablet which has been read before the king”,<sup>238</sup> clearly suggesting a proposal of a royal image to be rendered in reliefs. Since it was a copy, another tablet was read to the king, which perhaps was now re-adjusted or completed. The colophon also suggests that the king was actively involved in the process of selecting the information about his military exploits and how it was shaped to become visual depiction, although we don’t know his reaction to this particular proposal. The epigraphs in this collection were arranged thematically, rendering several series of stories involved in the Teumman – Dunnanu campaign. Epigraphs (1)-(3) introduce the topic and the characters: (1) Ashurbanipal sent the Assyrian army to Elam with Ummanigaš (son of former Elamite king Urtaki), who had previously fled to Assyria in submission. (2) Simburu, an official of Elam, became frightened and submitted to the Assyrian king. (3) Umbakidinu and Zineni, officials from Hidalu (concurrent<sup>?</sup> center of power in Elam), also became frightened and, in order to buy their peace with the Assyrians, decapitated a series of Elamite nobles and submitted to the Assyrian king. The first of them is said to carry the head of the king of Hidalu – Ištarnandi. While none of these Elamite officials appear in any of the annals (or labels in the reliefs), Ištarnandi is mentioned only in Edition C of the annals, but at the conclusion of the campaign against Teumman and Dunnanu (Edition C, *girru* 8). His chopped off head is said in Edition C to have been carried around the neck by Samgunu, Dunanu’s brother, in humiliation and punishment for joining the Elamites against Assyria. At this point in the epigraph (3) a spatial reference is made – Zineni is said to have

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<sup>236</sup> See Weidner’s epigraphs 1-38 and other ten epigraphs with no number. Weidner, 1932-33: 178-191.

<sup>237</sup> Russell, 1999: 193 and the following discussion.

<sup>238</sup> Borger, 1996: 306 (A1 IV 2), Weidner, 1932-33: 186-187 (end of §38).



been also “depicted in the lower register”.<sup>239</sup> It may be that a plan with the arrangement of scenes in reliefs was connected to this tablet.

Epigraph (4) introduces the adversary – the battle line of Ashurbanipal is set against Teumman, king of Elam. Needless to say that the Assyrian army is referred to as already victorious. Epigraphs (5)-(15) recount the story of Teumman during the battle and afterwards: (5) when he saw the defeat of his troops, Teumman fled, tearing his beard; (6) his son, Tammaritu, escaped from the battle and tried to help his parent; (7) wounded in battle, Teumman ran with his chariot to hide in the woods, but the vehicle broke and fell on top of him; (8) a pole of the wagon pierced the two fugitives; epigraph (9) is lost, but considering the following details, it must have mentioned the beheading of Teumman. In (10) the Assyrian soldiers cut the head of Teumman and quickly went with it to Assyria. It was brought in front of Ashurbanipal’s chariot outside Assur’s gate of the capital Nineveh. There, (11) Ashurbanipal mutilated the face of Teumman with a knife, cutting its tendons. (12) Teumman’s messengers detained at Nineveh because of their insolent messages were faced with the horrid sight of their lord’s head and went mad – Umbadara tore out his beard and Nabû-damiq stabbed himself. This scene is also described in the same terms in Edition B of the annals, within *girru* 8, in the aftermath of the Gambulu campaign (and the previous Teumman campaign in *girru* 7). It was taken over by Edition C also in its 8<sup>th</sup> *girru*. In epigraph (13) Ashurbanipal enters Nineveh with the head of Teumman and in (14) the head is presented as offering at the gate inside the city and a libation is poured over it. An ancient oracle is said to have foretold that Ashurbanipal would cut the head of his enemies and pour wine over them; accordingly, Ashurbanipal did cut the head of his enemies and poured wine over them. The head of Teuman in a ceremonial context, when libations were possibly poured over it, may have been rendered in a badly damaged relief in Room I of the North Palace.<sup>240</sup> The king was shown on the walls of a city, whose name is lost, at an entrance marked by two poles (similar to a rendering in another relief with the king pouring libations – see below). None of these accounts appears in any editions of the annals, so they must have had a completely different source of inspiration.

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<sup>239</sup> Borger, 1996: 299 (3 I 8, A1 I). See translation in Russell, 1999: 158 (3).

<sup>240</sup> Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXV, slab 9, upper register. See discussion on this slab in Chapter 2 of this thesis (Room I).

After the story of Teumman is exhausted, the next story returns to the battle proper where epigraphs (15)-(16) introduce more of its effects in terms of Elamite military officials who acknowledge Assyrian might and give up fight. Epigraph (15) accounts how a person, whose name was left blank, was wounded by an arrow, but did not die and called to an Assyrian soldier offering his own head. This entry suggests a proposal for a scene, rather than a scene proper, given that the name of the protagonist was not yet settled. This exact epigraph appears inscribed in a scene of Room 33 in the Southwest Palace, where the name is finally introduced – Urtak, in-law of Teumman.<sup>241</sup> A character “wounded by an arrow, but did not die” seems to be rather a stock construction – it was used in an epigraph within a relief of the North Palace in connection to the killing of a lion, which finally met the king’s dagger and died.<sup>242</sup> It also appears in Edition Kh concerning the Elam 4 campaign with the attack on the Elamite fortress Bit-imbi. In the latter, the person wounded by an arrow but who did not die, coming most probably from Babylonia (the context is connected to Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s rebellion) managed to escape to Elam. Because the text is badly damaged, though, the name of the person is unknown. Epigraph (16) accounts how an Elamite, Ituni, said to be a military official of a person whose name again is left blank (the space is introduced with the expression “so-and-so”), was overwhelmed by the Assyrian onslaught and cut down his bow with his own dagger. This epigraph appears in the exact words in a relief of Room I in the North Palace.<sup>243</sup> The exact scene appears without any epigraph in the reliefs of Room 33 in the Southwest Palace also. It may be that what we are dealing with are stock images in order to render the battle against the army of Teumman, emphasizing the Assyrian might through personal dramas of Elamite characters, rendered high ranks and names. Neither Urtak as Teumman’s family, nor Ituni appear mentioned in any of the editions of annals or in any other document for that matter. The scene of Ituni in Room 33 may have been taken over as stock image for the battle (later?) when the North Palace was decorated.

Epigraph (17) introduces the conclusion of this military affair – Ummanigaš, the Elamite fugitive, was installed by an Assyrian military official on the throne of the now dead

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<sup>241</sup> See Epigraph in Room 33 in Gerardi, 1988: 30. The epigraph appears on slab 2, lower register, showing an Elamite fallen on the ground among dead bodies. See image in Russell, 1999: 175, Fig. 58.

<sup>242</sup> In a relief fallen in Room S. See Barnett, 1976: Pl. LVI, slabs D-C, upper register. See epigraph in Gerardi, 1988: 26-27.

<sup>243</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2 in this thesis. The epigraph appears in a scene on what may have been a fragment of slab 1 in Room I in the North Palace. See **Pl. 6** in this thesis.

king Teumman in Susa and Madaktu. The same epigraph was verbatim used in a scene of Room 33 of the Southwest Palace showing an Elamite introduced by hand in front of bowing and submitting Elamites and a city (labeled Madaktu).<sup>244</sup> A similar rendering appears in Room I of the North Palace, but without any epigraph inserted above the introduction scene. The city is depicted differently and without any label either (this time it may actually be Susa). The images in Room 33 seem to have functioned as inspiration for the reliefs in Room I (as far as the very few slabs preserved from Room I are concerned). The installation of Ummanigaš as Assyrian interposed on the Elamite throne was mentioned in the Editions B and C of the annals as well.

With epigraphs (18)-(29) another story is accounted – the campaign against Dunnanu, the Gambulean king. Epigraph (18) redirects the Assyrian army from Elam to the fortress Šapi-bel of the Gambulean king Dunnanu, blocking anyone's escape. In epigraph (19) Dunnanu, overwhelmed by fear in this blockage, went to Ashurbanipal's envoys and submitted. Epigraph (20) accounts that at this time Ashurbanipal was performing ceremonies for goddess Ištar in Arbela, and Dunnanu was brought to him there. Epigraph (21) tells that during the *akitu* ceremony for the goddess, Ashurbanipal threw Dunnanu on his belly and put his bow over him. The described projection is reminiscent of the rendering on a relief fallen in Room S in the North Palace.<sup>245</sup> It shows the Assyrian king holding a bow over the lions he had killed and pouring a libation in front of a table (altar) and a pole (standard of goddess Ištar?) in accompaniment of musicians.<sup>246</sup> Human enemies and lions as defeated adversaries of the Assyrian king are mentioned in the prologue of Edition F, where none of the foes or beasts is said to have ever overcome the bow of Ashurbanipal.<sup>247</sup> Epigraph (22) is fragmentary and mentions Dunnanu being brought to a city with hand and feet chained. More damage of the text follows, but what can be read from the 23<sup>rd</sup> entry is the name of Aplaya and of the 24<sup>th</sup> is the name of Dunnanu and the mention of some women. Epigraph (25) is also badly damaged; it mentions two heads and a prince. Epigraph (26) states that Dunnanu, Samgunu and Aplaya were chained together with a bear to a gate, perhaps of Arbela, for

<sup>244</sup> See epigraph in Gerardi, 1988: 32. See the scene in Room 33 (slab 5, lower register) in Russell, 1999: 177-178, Figs. 61 (general) and 62 (detail).

<sup>245</sup> Barnett, 1976: Pl. LVII, slab D, lower register.

<sup>246</sup> Russell, 1999: 162.

<sup>247</sup> See discussion of Edition F in Chapter III in this thesis. See the respective paragraph in Borger, 1996: 16, 209 (F§3, end of line F I 29-30).

display to the people. Epigraph (27) is again damaged, showing only that the text included the name of a city, which did not survive. Epigraph (28) has the beginning of the lines broken, but those involved (in plural), proffered insults against Assur, had their tongues cut and their skin flayed. The epigraph appears in a relief in Room 33 above a series of scenes depicting just these two actions. Curiously, the spaces for the names of the figures were left blank in the relief.<sup>248</sup> In Edition B of the annals these two persons are given names – they are Manukiahhe and Nabû-usalli, Teumman’s heralds, who bore the message with their king’s request for the extradition of Urtaki’s family (whom Teumman had dethroned). The text in this relief was apparently never completed during the reign of Ashurbanipal or his successors, raising the question about who would have visited the room and what role the epigraphs would have played in these conditions. The last of these series, epigraph (29) announced the horrid slaying of Dunnanu – on a slaughter bench like a sheep before he was dismembered. Like Editions B and C of the annals, written during the Babylonian rebellion and shortly after, the epigraphs in Text A emphasize the exemplary punishments of Teumman, Dunnanu and their entourage and supporters. Each of them, however, contain details not present in the other; more drama seems to have been sought by the epigraphs – the annals do not mention anything about Dunnanu and Aplaya being caged together with a bear.

Additional stories seem to have been introduced at this point.<sup>249</sup> The series (30)-(35) provide more information on the battle at Til-tuba, with epigraph (30) being a variation on the same theme as (1) telling that the army was sent with Ummanigaš to assist him in Elam; (31) a variation of (4) identifying the battle line of Ashurbanipal; (32) identifying the battle line of the adversary (Teumman); (33) stating the defeat of the Elamites; (34) mentioning the celebration of the *akitu* festival in Arbela and the display of Dunnanu, Samgunu, Aplaya and the head of Teumman; and (35) describing how Ashurbanipal dammed the Ulai River with the countless corpses of the enemy. Epigraph (34) seems out of place, but J. M. Russell considers that its insertion here was related to the mention of the further treatment received by Teumman’s head.

Epigraphs (36-38) returned to the Šapi-bel story, with (36) introducing details of the siege with the building of a ramp, the effect of Ashurbanipal’s majesty on Dunnanu, who,

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<sup>248</sup> Russell, 1999:180, Fig. 65 (slab 4, upper register). See text of epigraph in Gerardi, 1988: 31.

<sup>249</sup> Russell proposes that these additional stories must be connected to the colophon of the text – after having been read to the king, adjustments were made. Russell. 1999: 193.

like Ituni earlier, broke his bow, before coming with his magnates in front of Ashurbanipal in submission. Epigraph (37) mentions the capture of the enemy and their bounding in iron chains; an inconsistency occurs at this point – in one part of the text the king brags about having caught them with his own hands and immediately after the text states through the voice of the king that the enemies were chained and sent to him to Nineveh. Epigraph (38) mentions the captives the king carried with him to Assyria. It may be that even for the compilation of a single list several different sources were used and the compiler was more concerned with the description of the scenes than with the concordance of wording.

**Text B** is much more fragmentary, with only 8 epigraphs preserved (5 on obverse, 2 on reverse and one towards one edge).<sup>250</sup> Only epigraphs (2) and (30) coincide with Text A; two are more concise variants of epigraphs (3) and (28) and the rest are not contained by Text A (they received no number in Weidner's edition, as the author uses Text A as his main text for the reconstruction of the tablet epigraphs). One of these additional epigraphs mentions the installation of Tammartu I, brother of Ummanigaš, on the throne of Hidalu (in Elam), an event also narrated by the annals in Editions B and C. Another epigraph mentions Ashurbanipal taking the road to Arbela with the head of Teumman. The last two epigraphs are damaged and mention Ashurbanipal defeating his enemies, but no names survived. Its colophon preserves the coordinates "... center of Nineveh". The order of the epigraphs suggests a non-chronological arrangement, being probably a final draft to be put in practice or a copy after an existing relief. The preserved epigraphs have nothing in common with the epigraphs in Room 33, so they must have been connected to another place. If this was a draft for a room in the North Palace, it then considered rendering the installment of both Ummanigaš (epigraph 2) and Tammartu I (unnumbered epigraph).

**Text C** preserves 4 consecutive entries:<sup>251</sup> the first was the epigraph (2) of Text A, the second was the concise variant contained by Text B for epigraph (3), the third was yet another variant of epigraph (3)<sup>252</sup> and the last was epigraph (37) of Text A. No colophon survives from Text C, but it shows more similarities with Text B and perhaps the two are related to the same context.

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<sup>250</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p.194. Borger, 1996: 306-307.

<sup>251</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p. 195. Borger, 1996: 229, 305, 306.

<sup>252</sup> Text C actually splits epigraph (3) of Text A which rendered the actions of two figures (Umbakidinu and Zinini) in two epigraphs regarding each of them independently.

**Text D** preserves 5 epigraphs.<sup>253</sup> The first one is beyond reading; the second is epigraph (7) of Text A, with details of the Til-tuba battle. The third is an epigraph which also appears in Room 33, a variant of epigraph (7), with the words of Teumman to his son after the crash of their chariot as to take up a bow. The last two are epigraphs (8-9) in Text A, the last also appearing in the relief of Room 33. They both account Teumman's and his son attempt to escape from Til-tuba, but being caught and killed. No colophon survived, but it shares more features in common with Room 33 and Text A. none of the details regarding the bitterness endured by Teumman and his son in their attempt to escape are mentioned by the annals.

**Text E** preserves 5 epigraphs on the obverse and 4 on the reverse.<sup>254</sup> The first three deal with the battle at Til-tuba – epigraphs (31) and (32) of Text A describing the battle lines of Ashurbanipal and Teumman and the next epigraph having no counterpart in Text A identifies briefly the head of Teumman. It continues with the festivities at Nineveh, where Teumman's head is exposed (epigraph 10 of Text A) and the further mutilation of the severed head by the king (Epigraph 11 of Text A). The other four entries are concerned with the festivities at Arbela. The first of them is the same as (34) of Text A, recounting the *akitu* festival and entering the city with the captured enemies and the head of Teumman. The next is contained only by Text B, specifying more succinct entering Arbela with the head of Teumman. It is followed by (26) of Text A mentioning the caging of the enemies together with a bear. The last epigraph mentions the emissaries of the Urartian king who were made to face the messengers of Teumman and their tablets with insolent messages. A spatial reference is then inserted – opposite these figures were other two officials of Dunnanu, who had their tongues cut and were finally flayed. This last epigraph seems to be entirely the description of an already existing image in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace, but the caption there left blank the space for the names of the mutilated figures. The embassy of Rusa, king of Urartu, is mentioned only by Edition C of the annals, while the punishment of Dunnanu's officials is also contained by Edition B. It may be that this text was closer to actual renderings in reliefs, but apparently not Room 33, which did not contain the names of the tortured figures. It may have thus been connected to Room I of the North Palace.

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<sup>253</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p. 195. Borger, 1996: 300, 307.

<sup>254</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p. 195-196. Borger, 1996: 301, 303-305, 307.

**Text F** preserves 3 fragmentary epigraphs:<sup>255</sup> (16), with the Elamite Ituni cutting his bow, (35) describing the amount of enemy bodies damming the Ulai River and a new entry, badly damaged, mentioning Elam. Not too much can be asserted from its information, except that the Ituni epigraph also appears in Room I of the North Palace as caption.

**Text G** preserves 3 fragmentary epigraphs,<sup>256</sup> all known from Text A (21, 37 and 34), but they occur there in a different order, apparently non-chronological, and with orthographic differences. As such, it may have described existing reliefs or served as ready-made guide for them. No colophon helps ascribing them in a certain context.

**Text H** preserved 5 fragmentary epigraphs in chronological order.<sup>257</sup> The first is epigraph (7) of Text A accounting Teumman's attempt to escape and hide in the forest, but having his chariot turn over. It is followed by an epigraph in Text D and in Room 33 with Teumman telling his son to take the bow. The next is again found in Text A (8), still with the scene of the Elamite king and his son being hit by a pole of the chariot. The following epigraph pick up again on Teumman having been wounded in battle, being helped by his son to escape and hitting towards the forest to hide, but adding that Ashurbanipal killed them. The last entry was also rendered by Text D and both were a variant of a caption in the reliefs of Room 33. As mentioned before, these details have no parallel in the annals. Its very minute chronological sequences suggest that Text H may have been more connected to existing reliefs than proposals.

#### **4.2. The Šamaš-šumu-ukin – Tammaritu – Arabs series**

The recovered fragments of this series render 9 texts with collections of epigraphs, labeled as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and J.<sup>258</sup> In all, around 32 or 33 epigraphs were identified belonging to this cycle. In the composite text of this series rendered by E. Weidner, they were

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<sup>255</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p.196-197. Borger, 1996: 305, 307.

<sup>256</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p. 197. Borger, 1996: 303-305, 307.

<sup>257</sup> Russell, 1999: 158-164, with discussion on p. 197. Borger, 1996: 300, 304, 307.

<sup>258</sup> Our interpretations of the epigraphs of this cycle are based on the transliterated texts (differentiated text-by-text) of Borger, 1996: 307-319, the composite text translations of Weidner, 1932-33: 192-202, the few translated fragments in Luckenbill, 1927: 399-405 (1075-1117), and CAD. See the fragmentary components of each text in Borger, 1996: 307-308.

labeled from 51 to 83 and from 51 to 82 by R. Borger.<sup>259</sup> The following discussion will take Borger's edition of the texts as reference using these numbers in relation to the epigraphs.

**Text A** is known from one fragment alone (the upper part of the tablet),<sup>260</sup> which preserves 11 epigraphs (the first seven on the obverse and the last four on the reverse), as well as a final colophon.<sup>261</sup> The epigraphs are written throughout the whole width of the tablet (not in columns). Epigraph (51) describes how Tammaritu (II), king of Elam, characterized as in the likeness of a *galla*-demon, joined forces with Ashurbanipal's enemy brother, Šamaš-šumu-ukin. At the command of the great gods of Assyria, a slave of Tammaritu – Indabibi – revolted against him and deposed him; Tammaritu, his family and nobles fled to Nineveh, crawling on their bellies in front of Ashurbanipal, exalting the name of the great Assyrian gods. The following epigraph (52) introduces the king in first person (I, Ashurbanipal – *anaku*) and describes how, because he trusted in Assur and Ištar, the standards of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's kingship, his royal chariot and the soldiers who started the uprising with him were scattered over the ground in front of Ashurbanipal. The rest of the rebels were caught on a battle line in their mountains and made to enter Nineveh mounted on camels, as a spectacle. Epigraphs (53)-(55) mention the capture of the Babylonian soldiers and the inhabitants of several cities who had allied with Šamaš-šumu-ukin in the uprising (Borsippa and perhaps Babylon). Epigraph (56) refers to the killing of some persons in connection to Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but their identity remains unknown. Epigraph (57), much fragmentary, renders Ashurbanipal's boasting in first person having been bestowed by the gods with a good destiny; it then mentions again Tammaritu II, his family and nobles, having previously joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin, and towards the end it mentions a joyful enter to Nineveh. The four surviving epigraphs on the reverse cover the Arabs subject: the first one (79) concerns the capture of Ammuladi and his being made to pass in front of the Assyrian king; the following epigraph (80) refers to Ammuladi being brought to Nineveh in celebration. The last two epigraphs are concerned with Adija, queen of the Arabs: one mentions her capture and plunder (81) and the other mentions the slaughter of her people and the burning of her tent (82). From the surviving epigraphs it looks like the arrangement was a thematic one: one narrative thread was concerned with Tammaritu's submission with all its background (51), another story with the punishments suffered by Šamaš-šumu-ukin's allies (52-56); another

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<sup>259</sup> Weidner, 1932-33: 192-208 and Borger, 1996: 318.

<sup>260</sup> Leepert, 1920: Pl. 21.

<sup>261</sup> Borger, 1996: 308-311, 317-318 (51-57/ 83, 79-82). Weidner, 1932-33: 192-195 (51-57), 200-201 (79-82).



story would have had Tammaritu II's submission brought in light again (57); and on reverse the Arab affairs (79-82) were the last story contained by the text. The list preserved a fragmentary colophon mentioning the walls of the *bīt redûti*, the North Palace (*ša ina ugu é-gar<sub>8</sub>-meš ša é NÍG-D[U(-)]...*).<sup>262</sup> This suggests that the narratives described in the text were prepared for or written after the reliefs in the North Palace.

**Text B** preserves 8 epigraphs, 2 on the obverse and 6 on the reverse,<sup>263</sup> with some of its fragments corresponding to the preserved parts of Text A and with other sections lost in the latter. On its obverse it preserves same epigraph (51) as Text A with the downfall of Tammaritu II at the command of the great gods due to his siding with Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his submission together with his family and nobles in front of Ashurbanipal; this is followed by a long lacuna due to damage, and when the text resumes it renders the (still very fragmentary) content of epigraph (57), again concerning Tammaritu II, similar to Text A. On the reverse, epigraph (67) is very fragmentary with few readable words; it mentioned Tammaritu II, a brother of his, Umanaldas, a badly preserved name of commander of archers (Uttedi?) and Teumman, the archer commander of *bit-halla*. Text B preserves traces of the epigraph (68), which introduces Tammaritu II as the king of Elam who, supporting Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion, decided to do battle with the Assyrian troops. Ashurbanipal prayed to Assur and Ištar and the gods decided Tammaritu's downfall, without any intervention from Ashurbanipal: Indabibi, Tammaritu's slave, rebelled and defeated Tammaritu's troops in battle, the latter then fleeing by sea-road. The next preserved epigraphs appear to simply introduce and identify several characters: (73) identifies a character whose name is badly preserved, said to be the son of Ummanappi, who in turn was the son of Urtaki, king of Elam; (74) introduces Ummanaldas, son of Teumman, king of Elam; (75) mentions Umbakidenu, son of Umanappi, son of Urtaki, king of Elam and (76) another damaged name, who functioned as bailiff of Hidalu (power centre in Elam). Again a colophon preserves parts of two lines – the first line mentions provenance "...the walls of the *bīt redûti*" (...-meš *ša é ri-du-u-ti*), while the second line preserves what was translated as "...of the South House/ Palace" (*ša é IM šu-u-ti*).<sup>264</sup> It is not clear to what the latter may refer – it can be another palatial edifice or simply a cardinal indicator of a suite or room in the North Palace.

<sup>262</sup> Borger, 1996: 318.

<sup>263</sup> Borger, 1996: 308-309 (51), 310-311 (57/83), 314-315 (67-68), 317 (73-76). Weidner, 1932-33: 192-198 (51), 194-195 (57), 198-199 (67-68), 200-201 (73-76).

<sup>264</sup> Borger, 1996: 317. See CAD/ Š3: 409 (b) *šutu* – "South" in architectural contexts.

**Text C** preserves 4 epigraphs, 2 of them on the obverse and 2 on the reverse.<sup>265</sup> On the obverse, epigraphs (53) and (54) are the same as in Text A, recounting the capture of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's allies in the rebellion – his soldiers and the inhabitants of Borsippa. On the reverse, epigraph (71) introduces the battle line of Ummanigaš (whom Ashurbanipal had set on the Elamite throne after the defeat of Teumman), who did not remember the good done to him. It is then said that Tammaritu II fought and defeated him. On the same line of the story, epigraph (72) identifies the severed head of Ummanigaš, who joined the Babylonian rebellion. The head is then said to have been brought by Tammaritu II to Madaktu to be inspected by the Assyrian general who had installed Ummanigaš on the Elamite throne, as token of friendship. No colophon survives of this text.

**Text D** preserves 13 epigraphs in an uninterrupted succession, the last two of which continue on the reverse – epigraphs (54)-(66).<sup>266</sup> The arrangement of epigraphs seems to be a thematic one. Epigraphs (54)-(56), same as in text A, concern the capture and punishment of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's allies – the capture of the inhabitants of Borsippa (54), Babylon (55) and the slaying of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's officials (56). Epigraph (57), also present in Text A dealt with Tammaritu II's submission after previously joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin. Epigraphs (58)-(60) deal with the severe punishments of several characters, also joining the great rebellion. In Epigraph (58) several persons, whose identities are not preserved (but a plural is used), were captured by the king, suffered decapitation and flaying and someone's flesh was scattered. In epigraph (59) a certain Nabû-zer-ukin, subject of Ashurbanipal, broke his oath and joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The hand which armed the bow to aim against Assyrian troops was burned and the he was flayed. The same fate and for the same reasons was suffered by another character; the name is not preserved, but he came from the city of Bit-Dakkuri (Aramean fortress in Babylonia in the region of Nippur). The next series of epigraphs (61-64) introduces objects and characters. Epigraph (61) introduces the king in first person (*anaku*) receiving the royal insignia of Šamaš-šumu-ukin – from clothing and people to his chariot and horses. This epigraph is the only one which also appears in a relief of the North Palace (on slab 13 in the throne room). Epigraph (61) identifies a certain Nabû-šalimšunu, the charioteer of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, and his son Manuki-babili (perhaps another member of the royal chariot team). Epigraph (63) identifies a certain Ea-zer-qiša of Bit-Amukkani. Like Bit-Dakkuri, mentioned earlier, this city was also an Aramean fortification in Babylonia. Edition

<sup>265</sup> Borger, 1996: 309 (53-54), 316-317 (71-72). Weidner, 1932-33: 194-195 (53-54), 198-201 (71-72).

<sup>266</sup> Borger, 1996: 309-314 (54-66). Weidner, 1932-33: 194-199 (54-66).

Kh of the annals mentions these two cities, together with Uruk, Nippur and Larak as having withdrawn from Assyria and add themselves to Elam (moving thus under Elamite suzerainty). Their people were taken during the campaign against the fortress Bit-imbi (Elam 4) together with spoils from Elam to Assyria and killed according to their sins. Epigraph (64) again introduces first the king in first person, stating that the gods had commanded that the kings dwelling in their palaces bow in submission to his yoke. Afterwards, the text identifies the bows of Tammartu II which he had armed against Assyria; the text becomes fragmentary, but it can be understood that the gods had reversed the situation and those bows were now Assyrian possession. Another story starts with epigraph (65) – the king introduces himself in first person and states that the gods brought his adversaries under his sway. It then recounts Tammartu II's joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin, his dethronement by Indabibi, his slave, and his flee to Nineveh where he pleaded Ashurbanipal's majesty. In the next epigraph and the last preserved (66) the story of an Elamite king is given (the name is badly damaged and the story is confusing, being similar to the story of Ummanigaš, but containing elements which differentiate it as well). The name of Indabibi was also proposed.<sup>267</sup> The Elamite king did not remember the good done to him by Ashurbanipal and broke his oath sworn to the great gods; in effect, his land rebelled against him, forcing him to flee to the mountains. He was killed and decapitated (due to the fragmentary state of the text, it is not known by whom) and his arms, feet and forehead cut off. The head was brought by Tammartu II to an Assyrian general. If Ummanigaš was the Elamite king, his story changed from the accounts of the annals and from the epigraphs (71)-(72) preserved in Text C, where he was defeated in battle and decapitated by Tammartu II, with no flight to the mountains. If indeed Indabibi is meant in the text, this episode must refer to an action soon after the reinstallation of Tammartu II on the Elamite throne with Assyrian help, after the flight of Ummanaldas and Umbahabua (reported in Editions F and A of the annals concerning Elam 4 – see Appendix). In the account of Elam 4, Edition Kh contains a very fragmentary paragraph which states that Tammartu II, the fugitive (at Nineveh), who fled from Assyria to Elam, heard of the terror of Ashurbanipal's weapons in Elam (most certainly against Bit-imbi, whose capture is mentioned right in the previous paragraph). Among big lacunae, the text mentions a chariot collapsing and a general. This may correspond to the action described in the similarly fragmentary epigraph (64). The text does not preserve any colophon.

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<sup>267</sup> Weidner considers that the Elamite king's name should be restored as Indabibi. Weidner, 1932-33: 197 with fn. 95.

**Text E** contains 4 consecutive epigraphs on its obverse (61-64) and an incantation on its reverse.<sup>268</sup> The epigraphs are the same series contained also by Text D, with the caption appearing in the throne room relief of the North Palace (61) recounting Šamaš-šumu-ukin's regalia, the identification of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's charioteers (62), the identification of Ea-zer-qiša from the Aramean city Bit-Amukkani (63) and the identification of Tammaritu's bows which became Assyrian possessions (64). The incantation preserved the mentioning of a palace, but the reference is unclear. Borger reconstructs it as the "Left Hand Side" (North) of the palace in Nineveh.<sup>269</sup>

**Text F** preserves only two epigraphs on its reverse (65-66).<sup>270</sup> They are the same as in Text D – the first deals with the submission of Tammaritu II after his dethronement by Indabibi (65) and the next treats with the story of either Ummanigaš or Indabibi, defeated and decapitated, whose head was presented by Tammaritu II to a general. There is no colophon preserved.

**Text G** preserves 11 epigraphs, all in consecutive order (66-76) and all on the reverse.<sup>271</sup> Epigraph (66) renders the story of Ummanigaš/ Indabibi and his execution. Epigraph (67) identifies relatives and high ranking military officials of Tammaritu II – it mentions Ummanaldas, the brother of Tammaritu II, Uttedi, the commander of archers, Teumman, the commander of archers of *bit-halla*. Next, another variant of Tammaritu's story is presented in epigraphs (68-70): in the first one the episode of Tammaritu's downfall is told – he joined the Babylonian rebellion, but hearing Ashurbanipal's prayer, the gods had Indabibi, a slave of Tammaritu II rebel and depose him, forcing him to flee taking the sea-road. Next, epigraph (69) identifies the ship of Tammaritu and the harshness he and his crew had to endure, depicting the Elamite king in quite a ridiculous pose – the ship got stuck in the mud and the king had to be carried on the back by a servant through difficult terrain and the whole party had to eat uncooked food in order to deal with their hunger. Epigraph (70) completes the story with the providential intervention of Ashurbanipal – after sailing the bitter sea, Tammaritu II understood what evil looks like. But Ashurbanipal sent him gifts of his majesty, which Tammaritu II accepted and kissed the ground before Ashurbanipal's

<sup>268</sup> Borger, 1996: 312-313 (61-64). Weidner, 1932-33: 196-197 (61-64).

<sup>269</sup> Borger, 1996: 313.

<sup>270</sup> Borger, 1996: 313-314 (65-66). Weidner, 1932-33: 196-199 (65-66).

<sup>271</sup> Borger, 1996: 313-317 (66-76). Weidner, 1932-33: 196-201 (66-76).

general. The next two epigraphs (71-72) tell the story of Ummanigaš's downfall at the hand of Tammaritu II, in the same words as Text C. The first entry (71) identifies the battle line of Ummanigaš and tells his ungrateful background – enthroned by Ashurbanipal after the slaying of Teumman, he soon plotted with Šamaš-šumu-ukin against his benefactor. But Tammaritu II fought him and killed him. The second entry (72) presents the chopped off head of Ummanigaš, again recounting his breaking the sworn oath and joining the rebellion, and describes the action of the head being given by Tammaritu II in sign of good friendship for inspection to the Assyrian general who installed Ummanigaš on his throne in Madaktu after the defeat of Teumman. The last 4 epigraphs of the text (73-76) identify briefly a series of Elamite princes similarly to Text B – Ummanamnu, son of Ummanappi, son of Urtaki, king of Elam (73); Ummanaldas, son of Teumman, king of Elam (74); Umbakidinu, again son of Ummanappi, son of Urtaki, king of Elam (75) and Umbanakdinu, the bailiff of Hidalu (76). The preserved colophon is identical to Text B (but more fragmentary), mentioning the walls of the *bīt redûti* and the South indicator.

**Text H** preserves only 3 consecutive epigraphs on its reverse (68-70).<sup>272</sup> They are the same as in Text G: (68) accounts Tammaritu's story from his alliance with Šamaš-šumu-ukin, through his dethronement by Indabibi at the will of the gods who listened to Ashurbanipal's prayer, to his defeat in battle and flight through the sea-road; (69) describes the hardship and humiliation Tammaritu II and his company had to suffer as their ship got stuck in mud; and (70) recounts the benevolent intervention of Ashurbanipal, who, after Tammaritu experienced bitterness, sent him gifts which were accepted and had Tammaritu kiss the ground before an Assyrian general. There is no colophon stemming from this text.

**Text J**, the last one of this series, preserves one colophon on its obverse and 5 on its reverse (57, 77-80).<sup>273</sup> Epigraph (57) is just as fragmentary as in Texts A, B and D, but renders the same story; it has Ashurbanipal stating that the gods established a good destiny for him, which is confirmed by the story of Tammaritu II, who, together with his whole family and nobles fled from Elam and held the feet of the king, after he had previously joined the Babylonian rebellion. The strengthening of Ashurbanipal's kingship by the gods is mentioned and a joyful entering to Nineveh. Epigraph (77) is completely damaged and

<sup>272</sup> Borger, 1996: 314-316 (68-70). Weidner, 1932-33: 198-199 (68-70).

<sup>273</sup> Borger, 1996: 310-311 (57/83), 317-318 (77-80). Weidner, 1932-33: 200-202 (57, 77-80, 83). Borger considers that Weidner's epigraphs (57) and (83) are the one and same text and that it actually belongs to the obverse of Text J, not its reverse.

beyond reading. Epigraph (78) is fragmentary, but mentions an uprising and the king's might overwhelming the enemy, who recognized the power of the great gods in the king's war. These enemies were made to sit on camels and made to howl with the Assyrians who made music before the king. It may be that this epigraph was part of the following story, concerning the Arabs, given that the camels are mentioned. However, camels are also mentioned in epigraph (52) preserved only in Text A, which accounts the standards of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, his soldiers and their relatives who rebelled with him, mentioning that the rest of the rebels, after being caught in the mountains, were made to enter Nineveh on camels for the enjoyment of the Assyrians. The last series of epigraphs (79-80) are concerned with the Arab affairs, in the same rendering as Text A – (79) identifies Ammuladi, king of Qedar, captured (by the king's own hands) and made to pass before the king; and (80) describes the action of entering Nineveh with Ammuladi amid rejoicing. The rest is broken, but part of the colophon survives, introducing yet another coordinate – “East House/Palace, of the walls” (é IM-kur-ra ... é-gar<sub>8</sub>-meš).<sup>274</sup>

## Discussion

The texts of this cycle are a lot more fragmentary than the Teumman-Dunnannu ones. The texts preserve the epigraphs in various states of completeness and do not allow for minute appreciations of identical wording from one text to the other or different positions of the epigraphs in the text, as was the case with the Teumman-Dunnannu cycle. As far as the recovered fragments are concerned, when several texts preserve the same epigraphs in a better shape, it seems that the wording did not suffer changes from one another; it also appears that in the preserved corresponding parts of several texts the order of the epigraphs was the same. If this was the case, quite a number of identical collections were issued.

Three of the texts were certainly in connection to the wall reliefs of the North Palace: Texts A, B, and G are of the walls of the *bīt redûti*. From them, Text A had yet a second coordinate – the South House/ Palace. A third indicator appears on Text J – the walls of the East House/ Palace. The last two may indicate other palatial edifices or specific suite or rooms in the North Palace. Several spaces in the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, apart from Room 33, may have been decorated by Ashurbanipal and perhaps the collections are connected to them as well (but no epigraph survives in those instances to confirm this). Texts E and D do not have a colophon, but they contain the only epigraph occurring in a relief of

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<sup>274</sup> Borger, 1996: 318.

the North Palace, and more so in the throne room. Text D also preserved the largest amount of epigraphs in succession; it appears that the arrangement there is thematic, with successive stories made by one or several epigraphs. The same is suggested by the other longer Text G, which unfortunately does not preserve the corresponding part in D to allow for a better comparison of order of epigraphs; but it shows that the arrangement of the epigraphs it contained was not chronological, referring first to Tammaritu II's dethronement and then to an earlier stage when Tammaritu II himself dethroned Ummanigash and seized the throne. The texts did not refer to one room alone, as it will become apparent when reliefs will be discussed – the Arab campaigns were apparently ascribed their own room (the retiring Room L of the throne room suite), with no other historical narratives.

What can be done for now is to present the possible historical narratives which were taken into account or proposed at some point for the decoration of the throne room and other spaces in the North Palace. They will be observed in parallel with the renderings of the annals which cover the same subject. These virtual narratives will be considered from the texts related to the North Palace either by their colophon or by the epigraph entry duplicating the capture of a relief in the throne room (epigraph 61). Thus, the description is based on Texts A, B, and G (with *bīt redûti* colophon) and Texts D and E (with epigraph 61 from the relief). Practically they cover all the epigraphs of this series. Texts D and G being the longest, overlap with most of the entries in the other texts. The stories presented by this series are thus the following: The first story (epigraphs 51-56) would describe in length the subject of Tammaritu II's submission and punishment of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's allies. The story of Tammaritu II's dethronement in an internal uprising and his fleeing to Nineveh after his previous support in the Babylonian rebellion is rendered similarly in the annalistic editions. The following episodes in epigraphs (52-56) with the capture of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's standards although implied by the annals, do not have a direct correspondent. Epigraphs are more specific, suggesting other sources for inspiration.

Another story (epigraphs 57-60) starts again with Tammaritu II and the background of his fleeing to Nineveh, adding a further detail of entering Nineveh in joyful atmosphere. Fragmentary as it is, epigraph 57 would not find a complete parallel in the annals. It is again followed by punishments by flaying of some specific figures which joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin in his uprising. These details with precise names have no correspondent in the annals.

Either another story (61-64) or continuation of the previous, epigraph (61) from the throne room accounts that Šamaš-šumu-ukin's royal insignia are made to pass to the Assyrian king and Šamaš-šumu-ukin's entourage and supporters with precise names are mentioned as if identified in the previous scene with the review of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's standards and people. General reference to kings in their palaces bowing to the Assyrian yoke are further mentioned, without precise action, and the bows of Tammaritu II once set to fight against Ashurbanipal now in his possession. None of the names occur in the annals, or any precise description of such a scene. Tammaritu II's archers though are emphasized in the annalistic texts as part of the Assyria royal establishment after the latter became the subject of the Assyrian king.

Another round of Tammaritu II's story comes with epigraphs (65-66). In epigraph (65) the main idea is the same as in epigraph (51), just with different words. Next (66) came the story of either Ummanigaš who preceded Tammaritu II and was killed by the latter, or the story of Indabibi who dethroned Tammaritu II. If the latter is the case, then it would render an episode completely unknown in the annals, with Tammaritu II returning to Elam and slaying the one who dethroned him. If the former was the case, the story of Ummanigaš was changed from the account of the annals, which had him killed and decapitated in battle and not fleeing in the mountains and decapitated. Whatever the case, the victim's head was brought by Tammaritu II to an Assyrian general (which would make more sense if the victim were Ummanigaš, since he was installed on the throne of Elam by an Assyrian general). Another epigraph perhaps also in this series (67) identifies certain figures in Tammaritu II's entourage, including chief archers, again information missing from the annals.

Again Tammaritu II's story is shaped in another series (68-70), this time in different pace and with more episodes, as describing precise steps from Tammaritu's downfall for siding with Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his arrival in submission in front of Ashurbanipal. It is now mentioned for the first time in the epigraphs introducing his story that, after his dethronement and defeat in battle by Indabibi, Tammaritu II took the sea-road (68). That he fled by boat is mentioned only in Edition B of the annals. The next epigraph (69) identifies the ship of Tammaritu II and describes its mire in the mud, with Tammaritu II having to be carried by an attendant and struggling through difficult ground, eating uncooked food. The series ends with epigraph (70) which relates the whole story to the Assyrian king – having experienced the bitter sea and the bitterness of the gods' wrath for the sin against Ashurbanipal (because Tammaritu II had joined the Šamaš-šumu-ukin rebellion), Tammaritu



is to be saved. The king sent him gifts, which he accepted and acknowledged the Assyrian might by kissing the ground before an Assyrian general. This story is completely unknown and not even remotely alluded to in the annalistic editions (except for the boat detail, briefly mentioned). At all times in the annals, as in most of the projections of his story in the epigraph collections, Tammāritu II arrived in front of the king himself at Nineveh, with no gifts mentioned and no interest in his bitter travel by boat.

A new narrative is introduced with epigraphs (71-72). It appears to describe the battle between Ummanigaš and Tammāritu II over the throne of Elam. If this was the order in all tablets, it is obvious there was no chronological arrangement. The battle between the two Elamite royalties is put on the account of the gods who brought Ummanigaš his demise for being disloyal to Ashurbanipal and siding with Šamaš-šumu-ukin after the Assyrian king had positioned him on the Elamite throne. The first epigraph of the series (71) identifies the battle line and the second epigraph (72) identifies the severed head of Ummanigaš. The head, like in a previous story of an Elamite royal figure (epigraph 66) was brought by Tammāritu II to an Assyrian general for inspection. While the background on which Ummanigaš was dethroned and Tammāritu II gained the Elamite throne are part of the respective episodes in the annals, the narrative suggested by this series of epigraphs is completely unknown. Such a visual depiction of foreigners fighting each other would have been a novelty in the military narrative representations, since the common rendering was always the successful Assyrian army winning the battles. It was framed however to emphasize Ashurbanipal's support from the gods and the whole action represented as their intervention for Ashurbanipal's successful ends. Such a proposition, which does not put Tammāritu in a negative position, but actually eager to show token of friendship to the Assyrians, is quite curious, especially considering that the one just before was the humiliating story of his sea travel.

The next series (73-77), with the latter completely damaged), simply identifies Elamite figures: two grandsons of the former king of Elam Urtaki (whose family, the annals say, fled to Nineveh when Teumman took the throne); a son of Teumman and an official from an Elamite city. No context is given for these characters. It may be connected to the previous affair concerning the defeat and slaying of Ummanigaš only by the fact that Ummanigaš too was a son of Urtaki, former refugee to the Nineveh court before being reinstalled on the Elamite throne with support from the Assyrian troops.

The last series of epigraphs (79-82) in the collections connected to the *bīt redūti* or containing the epigraph in Room M covers the capture of Arab king Ammuladi and Arab queen Adija. The capture of Ammuladi appears already in Editions B and C, not by the hands of the king as in epigraph (79), but by the Assyrian subject king of Moab; these editions don't mention anything on Adija. Edition G has both Ammuladi and Adija captured by the king in the same sequence of events, "with his hands", and brought to Nineveh, same as Edition A.

The only epigraph not covered by the collections with the *bīt redūti* colophon or with the duplicate epigraph in the throne room is epigraph (78). Fragmentary as the tablets are, it may have still been contained by any of the collections. The epigraph itself is badly damaged making it hard to appreciate if it belonged to the Arabs narrative or if it actually provided the context of the Elamite names mentioned in the previous series. Uprising and rebels humiliated by being made to sit on camels for the entertainment of the Assyrians are mentioned, detail which can relate to both the Arab affair and the narration regarding the punishment of some rebels in connection to the Babylonian uprising in epigraph series (51-56). Again this would not find any parallel in the accounts of the annals.

To summarize, while the epigraphs in the Dunnanu-Teumman cycle clearly show that there were differences between the texts of this series, offering a glimpse in the process of planning the royal representations for the visual renderings in the reliefs, not the same is the case with the collections of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin-Tammaritu II-Arabs series. Their fragmentary state does not allow for comparison between texts and a clear observation of their configurations. The analysis of Teumman-Dunnanu cycle made by M. J. Russell showed that these collections were drafts with descriptions of visual programs in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace and in Room I of the North Palace. Some were proposals while others were more clear descriptions of final arrangements to be carved or already carved. The only analysis the second cycle allowed for was a survey of the narratives and the royal representations they would have conveyed and the relationship of the narratives in the epigraphs with the respective episodes in the annals. If we are to apply Russell's analysis from the Teumman – Dunnanu cycle on the Šamaš-šumu-ukin – Tammaritu series, the rather always thematic arrangement (at least as far as the longer texts allow), would make them similar to the arrangement of text A in the Teumman – Dunnanu cycle, which proved to be a more distanced or early draft for reliefs to be carved either in Room 33 or Room I. As such, the collections of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin-Tammaritu series would be expected not to have an immediate representative in final reliefs in the North Palace. The comparison of the episodes

in the collections with their equivalents in the annals showed that they most certainly had different sources of information or used the same information differently. When narratives coincided, it was more in connection to Editions B and C of the annals. Only when it comes to Arabs affairs the closer editions are Edition G and A for the simple fact that they are the only ones to mention Adija.

## **V. Royal representations in the North Palace reliefs**

This chapter deals with the visual aspect of the royal rhetoric as expressed in the reliefs of the North Palace in its ensemble. The palace is discussed suite by suite in order to facilitate a coherent understanding of their program in their architectural context, considering the general positioning of the suites in the palace complex, the place of the rooms in their suite and their particular architectural and pictorial features. The analysis considers the rules of “reading” the visual narratives, the variety of visual effects (symmetry, focus and conspicuous placement of scenes), as well as the mechanisms used in their construction (Assyrian artistic conventions). In order to make the discussion easier to follow from a visual point of view, individual plans are provided for each suite under analysis. The discussion is structured on five units corresponding to five suites of chambers and set of passages. Whenever the case, the analysis considers the relationship between the visual display of certain military affairs and their counterpart in the collections of epigraphs and the annalistic texts which have been introduced in the previous chapters of the thesis.

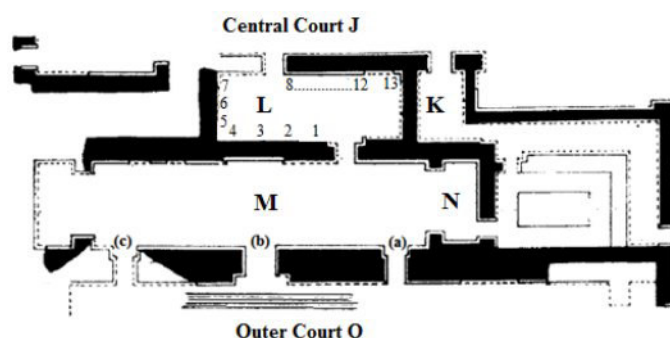
The artists working on the reliefs used a series of visual tools, such as: epigraphs directly explaining situations or identifying places and people; specific physical elements attributed to various populations, such as hairdo, beards or clothing; specific elements of landscape attributed (in the Assyrian perception of the world) to various regions (mountainous, marshy); and specific elements of booty related to particular places.<sup>275</sup> When epigraphs exist, they are considered in relationship to the image they were ascribed to. However, epigraphs are not always applied in the reliefs of the North Palace, some are destroyed and information remains unknown, and in several instances the reliefs of the rooms are just too fragmentary to know if they ever existed. The other elements too are sometimes puzzling, as they were employed not with the aim of general coherence in mind, but as tools of rendering a situation. The relationship between the visual narrative, architectural features and possible function of the rooms is also taken into account. The correspondence of the relief subjects with counterparts in the collections of epigraphs and the annals are also indicated.

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<sup>275</sup> Jacoby, 1991: 114, 122. The author provides a survey of the representation of cities in the Assyrian reliefs.

### 5.1. Courtyard O and Throne Room Suite: Rooms M, N and L

The outer court, the throne room façade and the throne room proper would have been for many the only part of the palace they would have seen. The throne room façade would therefore be lavishly decorated and impress by its monumental size and colossi which stood guard at its three monumental entrances. The North palace comported a series of differences.



**Fig. 1.** Individual plan of the throne room suite (after Turner, in Barnett, 1976: 28).

The outer court led to the Throne Room (M), accessed through three monumental doorways – a main entrance (b), flanked by two auxiliary, smaller ones, (a) and (c) – positioned at the end of a set of stairs. The stairs are a first new architectural feature. Compared to the throne room of Sennacherib’s palace, the throne room suite of the North Palace was just as monumental in size as the latter (see for comparison **Pl. 2**). However, the façade of the throne room in Ashurbanipal’s palace was left undecorated, containing only plain slabs. One slab only (slab 4), part of the decoration of the main entrance (b), set in the recess of the façade, bore reliefs. It contained a set of three guardian figures: three bearded men, facing towards those about to enter, wearing horned tiaras and long dress, armed with axes in a raised arm and holding upright daggers in the other hand (**Pl. 4**). The slab was re-worked from figures which initially held bows in their hands (with still visible traces). This type of figures was introduced for the first time in palatial reliefs by Ashurbanipal. The undecorated façade is also unique. Usually, the façade bore depictions of tributary processions and winged bull colossi with annalistic texts in the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II; the latter added also monumental representations of the “hero with lion” to this arrangement; the throne room façade of Sennacherib discarded tributary processions and “hero with lion”, but retained the other monumental elements of decoration.

The three god-like figures guarding the main entrance are identified by contemporary ritual texts as the *Sebetti* (“Seven”), the “great gods (...) sons of Enmešara, who hold furious

weapons”.<sup>276</sup> The ritual texts found at Assur and Nineveh were concerned with expelling evil from a house or healing the sick, and they gave references about the fabrication, name and features of clay and wood statuettes which were to be buried at doorways. Various types of clay statuettes mentioned by these texts were actually discovered at the foundation of houses and palaces alike (examples come from Sargon II’s palace at Khorsabad). One such text was actually recopied in the time of Ashurbanipal, as suggested by the colophon it contained.<sup>277</sup>

The *Sebetti* as figurines were ascribed by the ritual texts only to the outer gates (together with other figures), in a group of 7. They were required to be made of tamarisk (“the bone of divinity”), which would explain why no such figurine was ever found. It may be that the three existent characters at the entrance to the throne room were complemented by other four, now lost, to make a number of seven figures, and were placed on an adjoining slab or on the other side of the entrance. The bows they were depicted to hold in their hands initially and removed in the end are found in the description of their weaponry in the ritual texts, not in their hands, but at their sides. At this time the *Sebetti* are known from other contexts as well. They are important characters in the literary composition “Poem of Erra”,<sup>278</sup> copies of which were recovered from Ashurbanipal’s library at Nineveh. In this context, they were warrior creatures, creations of Anu to stand as companions for the god Erra/ Nergal (associated with war and pestilence) and functioned as his formidable weapons and merciless fighters. They also appear in Esarhaddon’s documents. In treaties, they appear as divine witnesses, who would bring about defeat upon the breaker of the agreement;<sup>279</sup> they are also mentioned in one of his building inscriptions (concerning works for the temples of Assur and Marduk), among the warrior gods (after Nergal and Agušea) who selected him for accomplishing their

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<sup>276</sup> “... [seven] statues of *Sebetti* crowned with their own tiara, clad in their own garment, you shall place them on a pedestal of tamarisk in a walking pose; they are clad in red paste over their uniform; hold in their right hands a hatchet of bronze, and in their left [hands] a dagger of bronze, are bound around their waist with a [girdle] of bronze, bound around their heads with a [headband] of bronze, furnished with horns of bronze, and bows and quivers hang [at] their [sides]” (lines 88-96). Wiggermann, 1992: 9-11; 21; 46. See also p. 59 ff. for a list of figures ascribed at the outer gates.

<sup>277</sup> See transliteration and translation of the text in Wiggerman, 1992.

<sup>278</sup> The text was composed anytime between 1100-750 BC and apparently circulated more than the “Epic of Gilgamesh” during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium (at Assur, Nineveh and Babylon), if we are to judge by the number of copies recovered. For a discussion of the text, see Bodi, 1991.

<sup>279</sup> Luckenbill, 1927: 229 (587); Bodi, 1991: 103.

plans.<sup>280</sup> Thus, in comparison with other apotropaic figures ascribed for the entrances, the *Sebetti* seem to have enjoyed more attention in the epoch, as they were part of the warrior divinities. Their choice for the North Palace must have been connected to both their warrior character and protective function. Their apotropaic character is made explicit by the ritual texts. Judging by their mentioning in the ritual texts and by the fact that many of the figurines described in the texts were found at the foundation of both palaces and common houses, we can assume they were part of a common practice and would have been easily recognizable, at least by Assyrian visitors. The reason why the *Sebetti* were first depicted with bows remains unknown. It may have been because they were now for the first time rendered in larger size and the right rendition was not clearly settled. The hatchet and the dagger they were finally depicted with match perfectly to the description of the *Sebetti* in the ritual texts and would have probably corresponded to the tamarisk figurines as well. Interestingly, the three figures are not quite large, the slab measuring only 89 cm, their introduction being thus related to their protective function rather than monumentality. Still there was a need for them to become visible, but their visibility would have become manifest only from close range.

Three figures in the same striking pose stood guard on each doorjamb of the main doorway of the king's throne room. All three characters, previously known as foundation clay statuettes, were introduced as large size palace decoration by Sennacherib (alongside older types taken over from his predecessors). The reliefs, fragmentary at the time of the excavation and now lost, are known from Boutcher's drawings. Only the lower part of the characters was preserved at the time of the discovery, but it seems that they were the same figures as those at the entrance to Room B (**Pl. 5**). In the latter case, the figures were of 160 cm height. If those of the throne room were similar, they would have been larger than the *Sebetti*. The three creatures depicted on the door jambs are identifiable by the ritual texts as: *Lulal*, *ugallu* and *lahmu*.<sup>281</sup> According to the ritual texts, the corresponding figurines were "statues of Ea and Marduk" and their function was apotropaic, with the role of "expelling the foot of evil" and "block the entry of an enemy in someone's house".

The floor at the main entrance was paved with a richly decorated stone carpet, containing floral motives, another architectural feature introduced by Sennacherib, replacing the

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<sup>280</sup> The warrior gods are listed after Assur, the Anu-Enlil-Ea triad, Sin-Šamaš-Ištar group, Adad, Marduk and Nabû. Luckenbill, 1927: 257 (667); Bodi, 1991: 105.

<sup>281</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 57 (*Lulal*); 169 (*ugallu*); 164 (*lahmu*).

previous inscriptions celebrating the royal achievements carved on the threshold. The entrance to the left (c) was not recovered; the one on the right (a) contained slabs which were recorded as badly damaged and without any further description at the time of the excavation.

**Room M**,<sup>282</sup> the throne room proper, (Barnett Pl. XXXIV-XXXVIII) is the largest hall in the palace. It has a rectangular shape, with **Room N** functioning as vestibule at one end, to the right from the entrance, and a possible similar alcove at the opposite end, to the left from the entrance, where the throne dais must have been placed. Lacking decoration, and due to its small size, Room N functioned as an auxiliary chamber, allowing passage to the staircase. The doorway between Room N and the staircase was not guarded by any figures, suggesting that it was considered a continuous space. In Sennacherib's palace bull colossi were set between the antechamber and the staircase. There is enough remaining space to the Southeast end of the suite to allow for the reconstruction of auxiliary chambers, including a bathroom, as was the case of Sargon and Sennacherib's throne rooms.<sup>283</sup>

The wall opposite the central entrance is set in a shallow recess and covered by two unsculptured slabs (slabs 8-9 on the southwestern wall), suggesting, by analogy to the similar structure in the throne rooms of Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II, that this recess was a secondary setting for the throne, used at certain occasions, in order to provide full view over the outer courtyard.<sup>284</sup> It may be that some sort of decoration, other than sculpture, was applied over the blank slabs.<sup>285</sup> Orientated on its long axis, the throne room accommodated more than one military campaign. Not much of its reliefs survived though. A hypothetical reconstruction of its visual narratives is discussed in a following chapter. For the moment it can be said that the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion and campaigns in Egypt are the only subjects which can be identified with certainty.

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<sup>282</sup> The throne room is discussed at length as case study further in the thesis.

<sup>283</sup> Reade's reconstructed plan of the palace, offers a hypothetical position of such a bathroom in the unexplored area. See Fig. 1 above. Curiously, Ashurnasirpal II's palace did not include a bathroom in the throne room suite.

<sup>284</sup> Tournier in Barnett, 1976: 29-30.

<sup>285</sup> The niche was decorated with apotropaic figures and the king attending a stylized tree in Ashurnasirpal II's palace; it was undecorated (at least not with reliefs) in Sargon II's palace at Dur-šarrukin, and it's not certain if it was blank or decorated with king and stylized tree in Sennacherib's palace (in the context in which such a scene was not rendered anywhere else in that palace). See Russell, 1991: 49-50, Porter, 2003 (b): 25-26; and Porter, 2003 (c): 19 (and fn. 53).



On the southwestern wall, Room M communicated with **Room L** (Barnett Pl. XXXII-XXXIII), which was smaller and rectangular in shape, functioning as retiring room and ensuring communication with the inner court J. It was decorated with scenes of military affairs against the Arabs. Many reliefs are fragmentary and others are lost. It is not clear what the register arrangement was. As they survived, the action is organized on three levels separated by a narrow band, which usually separates the registers. But the bands seem to work together as single scenes. The height of the slabs is around 134 cm, which is rather small compared to the height of reliefs in the other known rooms. When the action is organized in one register, the height varies from 152 cm (passage A) to 160 and 167 cm (in Rooms C and E). It may be that the slabs in Room L contained a second part above; the action was thus organized in two registers and at least one of them was further divided in three bands. The highest reliefs, also containing two registers (Room F), measure 228 cm, which would allow for a second register to have existed in Room L.

The surviving narrative depicted Assyrian chariotry, cavalry and infantry in pursuit of Arabs fighting from the back of camels with swords and arrows. Casualties, as was always the case in Assyrian art, were registered only on the enemy's side. The known reliefs show movement both leftwards, moving away from the entrance from Room M (slabs 3-7), and rightwards (slabs 11-13) with no elements of landscape. The pursuit advancing rightwards reaches a trees area, where the Assyrian soldiers are depicted cutting them down; this is the only scene with depiction of landscape (slab 7, bottom band) in Room L. The following reliefs on the wall towards the entrance to court J are not known. The sequence of narration on this side must have ended at the doorway.

The pursuit advancing leftwards reaches the Arabs' tents and the Assyrian soldiers set them on fire (slabs 9-10). This scene is positioned in a location opposite the entrance from Room M, with a slight deviation, which brings it directly next to the doorway towards the central court, and probably in the immediate attention of whoever transeated the room with the intention of reaching court J; the king was most certainly one of the spectators on his way from the throne room to the inner parts of the palace. Around the tents it seems that Arab women too are being slaughtered. The narration ends with the doorway.

No depiction of the king has survived from these series, no procession of captives and no epigraphs identifying action and characters. Since movement was carried out both to the right and to the left, it may be that the "reading" of the visual narration in Room L started from

both sides of the entrance from Room M (at least regarding the lower register). The scouted effect would have been therefore symmetry and focalization on a certain point where the enemy is annihilated. And that point would have been conspicuously placed at the spot of interest of those who passed through (on the direction throne room – inner court): the access way to the central court. It must be added that this is the only case when women are shown being assaulted by Assyrian soldiers. Given the fact that only half of the reliefs are known, our reconstruction remains partly speculative.

Two collections of epigraphs of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin-Tammaritu II-Arabs series contain epigraphs related to the Arab events, listed one after another and written at the end of the lists – Text A (epigraphs (79)-(82), with the colophon mentioning *bīt redûti* ) and Text J (epigraphs (78)-(80), with a colophon mentioning what was translated as “the East Palace”). Epigraph (79) introduced Ammuladi, king of the land of Qedarites, and stated that he was made to pass in front of the Assyrian king; the following epigraph (80) mentions the captured Ammuladi being brought to Nineveh in celebration; the next epigraph (81) has the king present himself and introduces Adija, the Arab queen which he had captured; the last entry (82) introduces Adija, stating that her people were slaughtered and her tents set on fire, while the queen was captured alive.<sup>286</sup> It may be that the preserved (bottom) register rendered the slaughtering of Adija’s soldiers and the assault on the feminine figures the capture of the queen herself; the (now missing) part of the lower register or the upper register may have shown the capture of Ammuladi and presentation scene(s) in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot. From the annals we learn that the Arab affairs contained actually many more episodes, but judging by the collection of epigraphs only the capture of Adija and Ammuladi were rendered or proposed to be rendered in reliefs. Why these two episodes were conceived to be rendered together in the same series of reliefs as suggested by the collections of epigraphs is not very clear. Judging by the earlier annalistic editions, Ammuladi’s capture (by the Moabite king, for that matter) took place sometime before the composition of Edition B (649 BC), the first edition of the annals to contain its account, while the capture of queen Adija is mentioned only starting with Edition G (646 BC). Edition A, in which all the Arabian affairs are put altogether as a single *girru* connected to the Babylonian rebellion, mentions the capture of Ammuladi and Adija (called now the wife of Yauta, son of Hazael) together. The scribes of Edition A, however, were in error in several instances, by confusing the identities of Yauta, son of Hazael, defeated before the Babylonian rebellion erupted, and

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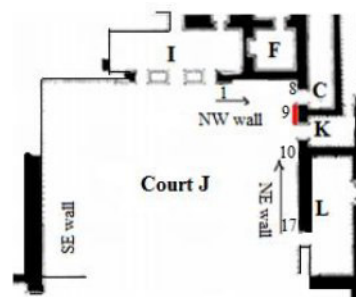
<sup>286</sup> Borger, 1996: 317-318 (78-82), Weidner, 1932-33: 200-202 (78-82).

Ouaite, son of Birdada (the former's cousin), who sent his troops in the aid of Šamaš-šumu-ukin.<sup>287</sup> Other important figures in the Arab affairs, which were finally captured and exemplary punished (at least according to the accounts of Edition A) are left outside of the epigraph collections and apparently of the reliefs.

It seems that no guardian figures watched over the access way between Room L and the throne room, again showing the continuum character of these spaces. It is difficult to estimate if this was also the case with the doorway communicating with the inner courtyard J, since one side of the doorway was not researched, while the door jamb of the other side is registered as badly damaged by Boutcher's plans. In Sennacherib's palace bull colossi stood at both these doorways. The doorjambes of the doorway to the inner court contained also reliefs with protective figures, facing to the outside, marking a separation of spaces and guarding the throne room suite. Given the frequency of protective figures in the North Palace in ensemble, it is very likely that such a pair existed between Room L and the central courtyard as well.

## 5.2. Central Court J and suite I, H, G and F

Further on, Room L of the throne-room suite led into the central **Courtyard J** (Barnett Pl. XXVIII-XXIX). The reliefs of the courtyard are fragmentary and most of those discovered are now known only from drawings.



**Fig. 2.** Individual plan of inner court J (after G. Turner's reconstructed plan, in R.D. Barnett, (1976: 28). the arrows mark the direction of the action in the narrative; the red signals the position of the king in the visual narrative.

<sup>287</sup> See Gerardi, 1992.

The northwestern and northeastern façades of the inner court revealed reliefs which most likely were arranged in two registers. Only the bottom register survived.<sup>288</sup>

The Northwest wall displayed war scenes on water and island formations, which probably indicates southern Babylonia, and a procession of civilian prisoners and booty facing right (slabs 1-8). The captives are recognizable as Babylonians/ Chaldeans by their hairdo and beard. There are men, women and children being led away by Assyrian soldiers, together with their goods and herds of animals (sheep and cattle) in a landscape dominated by tall palm trees. The procession is animated by small details of disruption, such as a woman giving water to a child, another one picking up a youngster in her arms, children riding on the back of a mule or some figures turning their head to those behind them. The Assyrian soldiers, slightly taller than the captives due to their pointed helmets, are inserted here and there, with raised sticks, carrying booty or herding cattle and sheep flocks. In the flock of cattle, the animals have their own actions; two bulls seem to challenge each other, one turning its head to the back, the other lowering his head as just about to charge. A calf joins its mother at the head of the herd.

If there was no opening of Room C in the inner court,<sup>289</sup> the narrative must have continued on the northeastern wall, and it most probably was concerned with the procession arriving in the presence of the king located on slab 9. In case a doorway opened at this point, the narrative would have been interrupted and resumed on the slab between passages C and K, where the king in his chariot was portrayed facing left towards the procession of the previous scenes (slab 9). Of this slab only a fragment survives as drawing of the king alone (Barnett, Pl. XXVIII).

Another interruption comes with the entrance to Room K. After the entrance, slabs 10-13 on the northeastern façade show a procession of captives (also Babylonians) being led away

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<sup>288</sup> Boutcher's drawing of slab 3 seems to support the idea of the existence of an upper register. See Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXVIII.

<sup>289</sup> The actual edges of the entrance were not recovered. A similar passage was reconstructed in Sennacherib's palace from a recovered doorway opening towards the central court. Apparently, it did not contain apotropaic figures. However, the presence of passage K in the North Palace, which opens clearly into the inner court and ends up in Room P around the staircase, and which practically parallels the connection C-D-B-P, complicates matters. Room C opening into the inner court is justified by the room's role in the communication system, as it enables communication between the central court and the passages leading to the West wing. Passage K would have made a detour through Room P and B, before reaching the corridors at the heart of the system.

and facing leftwards, that is, towards the back of the king of the previous slab 9. Slab 10, right after the entrance to Room K, is not known. Some fragments which show the procession of captives are attributed to the series of slabs 10-12 by Barnett. As such, it is hard to estimate what was the final point of the procession depicted in slabs 13-10. From the existing examples in other rooms, there is no precedent that a procession of captives stops at the back of the royal figure, from which it is separated by the space of the doorway. It may be possible thus that slab 10 contained the scene with the king in his chariot receiving and facing the civilian prisoners. While the entrance to Room K was guarded by protective figures, the room itself was only a small passage hall; if a royal figure was indeed at the end of this procession, passage K would have been flanked by the king in his chariot from both slab 9 and 10 and a symmetrical arrangement would have been seen from the inner court. The effect of such symmetry is known from other spaces in the palace, of smaller size and serving other functions, like bathroom Room F, where, when leaving the room, the individuals would have met on both sides from the door the image of the king in his chariot, facing in opposite directions (see case study Room F further in this thesis).

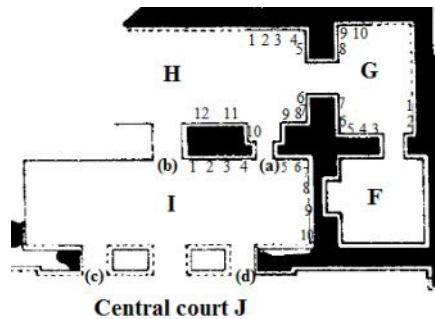
Nothing is known of the reliefs in slabs 14-17. However, we may assume that the relief following slab 13 must have depicted the place where the captives came from and the battle scene which led to their defeat. Also, nothing is known about what followed after the opening of Room L, because the wall has not been recovered at all.

On the opposite side, the Southeast wall of courtyard J was not decorated with reliefs; but, as already mentioned, the base of the wall showed strips of moldings. It remains unknown why some façades of the court were deemed fit for reliefs, while one was decorated with apparently some other technique. The fact remains that the North Palace allowed space for it, unlike, apparently, any other of the preceding main royal residences.

The actual events depicted are impossible to identify from the given evidence, since no epigraphs survive from the inner court. Actions in the South were conducted against Dunnanu, the Gambulean, and again later on, during the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and in its aftermath.

Inner courtyard J led to another suite composed of the reception Room I, retiring Room H, vestibule G, and bathroom F. As shown in Fig. 4, this secondary reception suite is only partially known, because its western part was not recovered (with little exceptions). If Rooms I and H were of same size, the suite would be a dual-core type, more frequent in

Sennacherib's palace. If Room H was smaller, it would be reception/ residential type of space. Whatever the case, it is a quite large suite, entered through most likely three monumental doorways.



**Fig. 3.** Individual plan of suite of Rooms I, H, G, and F  
(after G. Turner's reconstructed plan in Barnett, 1976: p. 28).

**Room I** is particularly informative because the subject of its sculptures has parallels in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace. Not much survived of the reliefs adorning Room I. From the opposite wall from the entrance only one fragment of a relief is known (a fragment from slab 1(?)). From the rest of the reliefs, slabs 5-10 are known only from Boutcher's drawings and a fragment of slab 9 survives in the Louvre. The reliefs seem to have been divided in two registers all throughout.

The surviving fragment of slab 1 (**Pl. 6**) contained an epigraph which helps identify subject matter of the room. It depicts an Elamite soldier (recognized by hairdo and beard) on the verge of being executed by an Assyrian soldier. The scene takes place between palm-trees, while the whole background is loaded with dead bodies of Elamites lying on the ground, one of them with severed head. The Assyrian soldier grabs the Elamite by the hair and waxes a dagger as if just about to behead his captive. The Elamite soldier puts forth no opposition, but keeps his bow and dagger in a non-combat pose. An epigraph in four lines is written just above the scene:

“Ituni, *šut reši* of Teumman, the king of Elam,  
whom he (Teumman) continually (and) insolently sent before me,  
he (Ituni) saw my strong battle and with the iron dagger of his belt,  
by his own hand, he cut the bow, symbol of his strength.”<sup>290</sup>

<sup>290</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 22f. See also the translation with minor changes in Russell, 1999: 173.

The voice of the narrator in the inscription is that of the king. He identifies the figure about to be beheaded as Ituni, a military official of the Elamite king Teumman, and concisely explains what he is doing: in a symbolic gesture, the Elamite general cuts his bow (the source of his strength) with his own dagger, an act equivalent with acknowledging the superiority of the Assyrian might and acceptance of defeat. Text and image are congruent in describing only one part of the action. But the cuneiform inscription complements the visual rendering, adding information not contained by the other. The text is concerned with explaining a symbolic gesture and it also introduces someone who is not actually rendered in the visuals, but who becomes the actual protagonist of the narrative: the Assyrian king. His name is not mentioned in the text and neither is his figure shown in the scene;<sup>291</sup> but his presence is invoked by the speech (“*a-di mah-ri-ya*” (sent) before *me*), as if the royal presence hovers over the whole action. It is important to note that only one of the two protagonists of the scene is identified by name and rank, and that is not the Assyrian soldier, but quite the contrary, the enemy. It was thus important for the royal rhetoric to stress out the enemy’s identity and single him out. The Assyrian soldiers, never shown wounded or killed, but always fighting and triumphant, never received names and ranks, but were kept under anonymity. They were not particular individuals, but an extension of the Assyrian king and his power.

The treatment of this particular character deserves attention. By identifying him by name and stressing his high military rank, the epigraph establishes his importance for the Assyrian royal rhetoric. Was his name actually known to contemporaries? The texts suggest it might be so: Ituni was sent *continuously* before the Assyrian king (“*iš-tap-pa-raš-šu*”), therefore, the real Ituni might have become a well-known name at the palace. However, none of the annals mentions this name; nor does any other documents of Ashurbanipal for that matter.<sup>292</sup> It only

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<sup>291</sup> Rassam’s correspondence and a description of Reverend J. Lobdell mention that a representation of the king was depicted in the room’s reliefs and it survived on a slab which was very fragmentary at the time of the excavation. According to their accounts, the king was depicted seated under a tent, with women standing before him in a gesture of supplication. A scribe nearby would have registered on a tablet the sum of chopped off heads in front of him. A three-line inscription, whose content was not recorded, was carved above the tent. Nothing survives of this fragment and its location within the room is not known. See Barnett, 1976: 42. On the other hand, an epigraph in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace mentions that the chopped off head of Teumman was dispatched to Assyria for the king, suggesting that the king was not represented in the scenes of the battle proper. See Russell, 1999: 171.

<sup>292</sup> The Elamite *Ituni* means “I gave it (this)”. See Waters, 2000: 52, fn. 71 and Zadok, 1984: 10 (39: I-tu-u-ni).

appears in the epigraph lists, which were related to the reliefs. The scene and the introduction of the name conferred authenticity to the depicted narration, particularizing a certain character used as pretext to induce emotion and credibility and to emphasize the Assyrian might. Its function in the royal rhetoric paved the setting for further implications. One aspect implied by the text is that the king's actions came in retaliation for continuous acts of provocation on the behalf of the Elamite king Teumman. It does so by putting the verb (*“šaparum”* “to send” a person) in Preterit (past tense) and Gtn-stem, as to render an iterative happening of the act.<sup>293</sup> The text justifies thus the military action of Ashurbanipal against Teumman, leaving space for the thought that previous offenses on the part of Teumman were answered with time to reconsider. This, of course, implies the just nature of the Assyrian king and increases the insolence of the Elamite enemy. It cannot be excluded that, if a real Ituni existed, the name may have been furnished by other sources such as field diaries or information provided by contemporary participants.

It is noteworthy also the fact that the text only stresses Ituni's gesture of destroying his own sources of power. Nothing is said about what was going to happen to him afterwards. But the pictorial message is clear about that: the Assyrian soldier is holding Ituni by his hair and is just about to strike him with the dagger, while all around are dead enemy bodies, one of them beheaded, while another one, at the left of the scene, is eaten by a scavenging bird. Thus, the viewer and the reader are witnesses of the moment before Ituni's death, the moment of maximum horror and anticipation.

Fortunately, the epigraph and the scene provide plenty of information. It identifies directly the military event the room was concerned with – the campaign against Teumman. More so, the same scene, but with some different details (the headgear of the Assyrian soldiers, the omission of the epigraph)<sup>294</sup> appears in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace, decorated with the same Elam 2 campaign. By analogy with the preserved reliefs in Room

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<sup>293</sup> CAD/Š (Part I): 430 (*šaparu(m)*).

<sup>294</sup> The Assyrian soldiers depicted in Room 33 of Sennacherib's palace are shown wearing cone-like helmets, while Ituni's executioner and other Assyrian soldiers in the surviving reliefs of Room I, although depicting the same event, wear no such head gears. This may be explained by the distance in time between the decoration of the two rooms and/ or the implication of different teams of artists. As such, it may be that the reliefs in Room 33 may have been also used as sources in conceiving the decoration of Room I and that some freedom of the artists was also involved.



33,<sup>295</sup> the relief in Room I may have rendered the defeat of Teumman at the battle of Til-tuba (close to Susa), the installation of Ummanigaš (fugitive Elamite royalty at Nineveh) in his place, the campaign against Dunnanu of the Gambulu, ally of Elam, and the punishment of several of their lieutenants. In Room 33 the Ituni scene is part of the episode of Teumman's beheading during the battle at the Ulai River (Til-tuba). Above it the capture and execution of Teumman and his son are depicted, and to the right from it an Assyrian soldier is moving away holding the severed head. The gesture of the Elamite cutting his bow appears in Room 33 as the immediate effect of Teumman's beheading upon his followers.<sup>296</sup> However, in Room 33 there is no epigraph applied to this scene and no identification for the character as Ituni.

The epigraph in Room I appears, however, in two lists from the Teumman-Dunnanu series (epigraph 16) – Texts A and F (the latter very fragmentary).<sup>297</sup> It occurs in a sequence concerned with the punishments of two Elamite military officials – an unnamed person, which appears in the relief of Room 33 with the name Urtaki, and Ituni, in whose case the space for the name of Teumman as his lord is left blank. Both texts may have been intermediary drafts for the reliefs in either of these two rooms.

Another important aspect is that the relief containing the scene of Ituni in Room I was set in a conspicuous place – on the opposite wall from the main entrance to the room, falling thus right away under the visitor's eyes. More so, this wall was positioned between the two entrances into Room H ((b) and (a)), a location which would have arrested the view of those who walked further into the suite. If the scenario was the same as in Room 33, close by this scene the killing of Teumman must have been depicted and would have therefore made the focal point of the room's decoration on the wall opposite the entrance and between the doorways to the retiring room. Since his killing must have preceded Ituni's surrender, the scene must have been placed closer to entrance (b), aligned on the same axis with the main entrance to the reception suite (in the middle). The image would have already induced the expected emotion in the viewer, while the text would have put an identity on the unlucky

<sup>295</sup> See the reliefs of Room 33 in the British Museum online collection (accessed April 2015):

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=328803&objectid=282825](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=328803&objectid=282825)

See also Russell, 1999: 166-181.

<sup>296</sup> Russell, 1999: 173-174 with fig. 57.

<sup>297</sup> Russell, 1999: 160 (16), Borger, 1996: 202 (16).

enemy about to be executed, conferring thus realism and authenticity to the scene in the eyes of the viewer. The text would have further delivered a more refined message about the Assyrian might, superior to any redoubtable warriors. And it would have transmitted a direct message to those acquainted with the actual Elamite general Ituni; and the message would have been put in the mouth of the king, the narrator of the inscription and of the whole event.

Other two small fragments, belonging most probably to this part of the narrative, show two Assyrian soldiers about to smite two Elamites. There is a difference however between the depiction of Ituni, who destroys his weapon, “symbol of his strength”, and that of the two Elamite soldiers about to be killed. While the general is portrayed standing, the two anonymous Elamites are depicted falling, clearly being defeated in battle. This argues for a further special significance given to the character of Ituni.

The rest of the reliefs in Room I (slabs 5-10, to the left from the entrance) show scenes in two horizontal registers, each in its turn organizing the action in three bands. The upper register depicts Assyrians in procession, moving towards the right, to a large city on a river, whose name is badly damaged.<sup>298</sup> Slab 9 depicts on the full height of its upper register a city with two layers of fortified walls. Inside the wall, to the right, a columned construction survives (visible in Boucher’s drawings), while to the left, flanked at its entrance by two tall standards, another edifice is rendered. Scholar P. Albenda proposes that the former should be considered the royal residence marked by the columned portico and the latter a religious structure marked by the presence of the divinity’s standards.<sup>299</sup> In front of this establishment several figures are depicted. Although the surface of the relief is damaged, the royal presence is still noticeable among the figures, by the tall, pointed Assyrian crown. The king is shown holding an upright bow and standing in front of a tall table behind which, facing the king, one or two other characters are rendered. From the drawings it seems that the king was also followed by an attendant. Although not existent in Boucher’s drawings, who may have simply overlooked it, from the surviving relief it appears that also a chopped off head was

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<sup>298</sup> Barnett assumes it is the city of Arbela where the *akitu* (the New Year) festival was celebrated after the defeat of Teumman. Barnett, 1976: 42. See also Reade, 1979 (d): 101 and Albenda, 1980: 6. However, a series of epigraphs recounting this story in the epigraph lists (tablet A of the Teumman-Dunnu cycle) states that the head of Teumman was bought by the Assyrian soldiers to Ashurbanipal in front of the Assur gate, which is in Nineveh, where it was mutilated and then presented as offering to the gods and libated over once inside the city. See epigraphs 10 and 14 of Text A in Borger, 1996: 301-302. See their translation in Russell, 1999: 160-161.

<sup>299</sup> Albenda, 1980: 2-5.

depicted on one of the wall's crenellations, between the king and the table.<sup>300</sup> The head is rendered with the face in profile looking upwards and is similar in appearance to the severed head hung up in a tree in the banquet scene in the reliefs fallen in Room S (discussed later in the thesis).<sup>301</sup> Vertical lines touching the head may stand for initial liquid streams poured by the king.<sup>302</sup> The upper register thus shows a procession of soldiers advancing towards a city, where the king undertakes a ceremonial in front of a religious edifice, which had to do with the deposition of the chopped off head of Teumman, the Elamite king who challenged Assyria's might. By analogy with the epigraph collections of the Teumman-Dunnu cycle, the scene can be identified with the aftermath of Teumman's defeat; his severed head was presented outside one gate of Nineveh, then presented again inside the city gate, when it is stated that Ashurbanipal fulfilled an old oracle, which predicted that he would pour wine over the heads of his enemies.<sup>303</sup> Later on, the head of Teumman was taken for the *akitu* celebrations in Arbela, but no libation is further mentioned.<sup>304</sup> The city represented in Room I may thus be either Nineveh or Arbela.

The lower register shows battle scenes in three bands, most certainly the continuation of the Til-tuba encounter. The action takes place on a river populated with fish, where dead bodies of the enemy, as well as remains of chariots are floating. Slab 7, immediately after the corner, changes the scene in its lower part and brings the viewer to the aftermath of the actions: the horizontal arrangement is interrupted by the vertical depiction of a stream flowing into the river at the bottom of the register. While in the lowest band, the battle continues, the first and the second bands show Assyrian soldiers leading a figure by hand in front of a group of Elamites bowing to the ground or raising their arms in a sign of submission. The scene takes place close to a city with a gate with three Elamite figures in a submissive gesture and a ziggurat rendered further on slab 9. The ziggurat is characterized by specific architectural features: two horned oxen skulls are depicted at its uppermost level.

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<sup>300</sup> That a head is depicted on the relief is demonstrated by photos of it taken by scholar P. Albenda in 1979; that the head was carved at the same time with the rest of the relief and is not the effect of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration was clarified by P. Amiet's close research of the spot, published in Albenda, 1980: 8; see photo of the detail in Albenda, 1980: 5 (fig. 5) and drawing by V. Place at p. 4 (fig. 4).

<sup>301</sup> Barnett, 1976: Pl. 65 (on the left side of the banquet scene).

<sup>302</sup> Albenda, 1980: 7.

<sup>303</sup> See Text A, epigraphs (10-14), in Russell, 1999: 160-161 and Borger, 1996: 301-302 (10-14).

<sup>304</sup> See Epigraph (34) in Texts A, E and G in Russell, 1999: 162 and Borger, 1996: 304-305 (34).

The similar scene in the lower register of Room 33 (slab 5) contains an epigraph identifying the scene as the enthronement of Ummanigaš on the throne of Teumman, both in Susa and Madaktu. A label on the city, however, identifies it as Madaktu. It is most likely this episode that the relief in Room I also refers to. However, in Room I neither the scene, nor the city, represented actually by a ziggurat, bear any epigraphs; in addition, the ziggurat is rendered with the pair of oxen horns. In this case it may be that Susa rather than Madaktu is represented.<sup>305</sup>

It is worth noting that slab 9 juxtaposes the images of two cities one atop the other in two registers: the Assyrian city where the Assyrian king, wearing the pointed tall crown, performs a ceremonial in front of an edifice with standards and the Elamite city with a ziggurat. Thus, the message follows not only the horizontal line of the narrative, but possibly also a vertical association of images. Two ceremonies take place in the upper and the lower register, one deriving from the other: in the upper register the triumphant Assyrian king enters in procession in an Assyrian city (Arbela?) after defeating and beheading the Elamite enemy king Teumman, whose head apparently he displays in this ceremonial. In effect of this military achievement, in the lower register the Assyrians install a new king on the Elamite throne.

The rest of the reliefs in Room I may have contained other episodes of the campaign, which are preserved in Room 33;<sup>306</sup> just as well, these episodes may have been adapted to fit the architectural demands of the new space, the taste of the artists and the king and perhaps a new perspective on the events themselves and their position in the royal rhetoric at the time of the North Palace.

The entrances of Room I from court J were decorated with floor slabs bearing floral motives, one of them similar to the mid entrance in the throne room. Nothing is known of its doorway jambs.

**Room H** (Barnett Pl. XXIII) was probably a rectangular, large room, similar to Room I. Its southwestern end was not researched, but it may have communicated further with additional rooms. The access from Room I was guarded by hybrid figures, emphasizing the

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<sup>305</sup> Reade, 1979 (d): 97-98.

<sup>306</sup> These are concerned with the celebration at Nineveh of the victory and the bringing of Dunnanu, the Gambulian along (a defeated ally of the Elamites, king in a political entity in southern Babylonia).

importance of the space within. Entrance (*a*) had on both of its doorjambs a bearded figure, whose lower part of the body was of a lion on rear legs, wearing a horned tiara, and holding an upright spear or a standard. According to the ritual texts, this figure can be identified as an *uridimmu* (“mad lion”), functioning as apotropaic figure, thought to keep out evil and banish sickness.<sup>307</sup> The other entrance (*b*) was guarded by a pair of hybrid creatures on each side of the door jambs described at the time of the discovery as “fish god” followed by a figure with bull legs.<sup>308</sup> Nothing survives of these figures. The “fish-god” and figure with bull-legs could be what the ritual texts call “*kulullû*” and “*kusarikku*”, also having apotropaic functions as clay figurines.<sup>309</sup> While the first one is ascribed by the ritual texts to be buried in the private parts of the house (bedroom), the latter has no particular place throughout the house (but in its interior). Their presence at the entrance to Room H may suggest the latter’s residential character. All these three guardian figures are known from Sennacherib’s palace already (the bull-man, however, is known to appear only once).<sup>310</sup>

Room H contained scenes arranged in two registers. The surviving relief is unfortunately very fragmentary. Only pieces of four slabs are known, which covered its Southeast corner. The upper part shows a park with conifers and palm-trees and numerous intertwining watercourses. In the park a columned edifice (a portico) and a crenellated gate-like construction are rendered. The latter edifice frames a rounded-top stele with the depiction of a standing king, recognizable by his pointed tall Assyrian crown. He is rendered doing a gesture with one arm raised to the level of the mouth. An alley comes down from the portico and in the middle of it a pedestal is represented (similar in shape with the famous object containing the depiction of Tukulti-Ninurta I, from the late thirteen century BC). On the slab across a doorway to Room I (slab 10), in the upper register, a fortified wall is depicted. At its center stands a columned construction.<sup>311</sup> The lower register of both slabs shows Elamite soldiers arranged in three bands, advancing rightwards, on foot, on horseback or in chariots. They are all armed, and hasting, but apparently not to war, as their weapons are not in a fighting position; none of the bows are flexed and charged with arrows and no spear is

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<sup>307</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 172.

<sup>308</sup> Barnett, 1976: 42.

<sup>309</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 182, 174.

<sup>310</sup> See apotropaic figures with their position in Sennacherib’s palace in Kertai, 2015: Pl. 21.

<sup>311</sup> Barnett proposes that the city with the park and columns is Nineveh or Arbela. See Barnett, 1976: 41. Albenda proposes that the city is Babylon, since the Elamites represented in the lower register fought there, as allies of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. See Albenda, 1976: 49, fn. 1.

oriented in front. Nothing else survives of the reliefs in this room, therefore it is impossible to identify a certain event which might be portrayed here. There are no epigraphs attached neither to the action, nor to the city. It does involve, however, actions concerning the Elamites. It is improbable that the Assyrian artists would depict an attack of the Elamites against some Assyrian or Babylonian city; in all the other rooms concerned with military affairs it is the other way around – only the Assyrians charge and conquer. It is also unlikely that the Elamites are running away from a battle, as they are too many and no casualties are depicted, which would not flatter the Assyrian army at all. The particular scene in the surviving fragments does not seem to be referring to war proper. The only action from the annals that would fit such artistic rendition would be voluntary submission and arrival at the court of Nineveh of several Elamite royalties with their factions. No rendition of a royal Elamite figure is rendered in the fragments to certify such suggestion though, but more such princes are said to have done so in the annals, shortly after the Elamite campaign against Urtaki (his whole house and his heir Ummanigaš fled to Nineveh, as Teumman took the throne), during the campaign against the Babylonian rebellion, when instability on the throne of Elam increased (Tammaritu II), and during the last major campaign against Elam and Ummanaldas, with the devastation of Susa (Elamite king Pa'e, who occupied the throne when Ummanaldas fled to the mountains). The annals (especially Edition Kh) and the collections of epigraphs (of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin -Tammaritu II-Arabs series) stress the twist of situation concerning Tammaritu II's archers, who were first set to fight against Assyria only later to become Assyrian asset, once Tammaritu II fled to Nineveh for help against an usurper.

**Room G** (Barnett Pl. XXII), is a smaller, rectangular room, which facilitated communication between Room H and Room F, functioning as a vestibule. Its reliefs depicted a military campaign against the Elamites, but not much of the relief survives in this case either – only the fragments and drawings of three incomplete slabs (slabs 3-5). The surviving relief showed scenes of battle in two registers: in the upper one, Assyrian soldiers charging at an enemy city towards the right, while the lower showed a procession of Elamite captives on foot and in boats along a large river depicted at the bottom of the register. They are advancing towards the left and are shown carrying goods. Behind them comes a series of captives which are shown just in the act of being embarked on a boat, two of them having their hands tied behind their back, and Assyrian soldiers carrying severed heads. This company is rendered in smaller size than the captives with goods in front of them, suggesting they were probably shown just coming out of a conquered city. Above them a river can be distinguished from

Boutcher's drawing. Here again it is impossible to identify the scenes with a certain event, but again it is obvious that the subject concerned an Elamite campaign. No epigraph inscription was retrieved from the room.

**Room F**, which will be discussed in detail as case study in the following chapter, was accessed only from Room G. It was a little smaller than the latter, had a square shape and functioned, most probably as a bathroom.<sup>312</sup> Room F was guarded by a pair of protective figures, *Lulal* and *ugallu*, and the reliefs on the walls depicted a military campaign against two Elamite cities, one of which was labeled by an epigraph as Hamanu. On the wall adjacent to Room I a niche adorned with hybrid figures interrupted the military narrative: *ugallu* and a lion-man standing on four paws, identified from the ritual texts as *urmahlullu*, on the sides of the niche, and another hybrid creature at the bottom of the recess. The latter is completely lost and is known only from Rassam's description; it is said that the figure had a scorpion tail. The surviving reliefs and the drawing of those missing allow for the reconstruction of the entire visual narrative and the understanding of its whole program. The image of the king appears two times in the reliefs of the room, both times in his chariot, dressed in full regalia and receiving processions of captives.

The city of Hamanu is known from the annals to have been captured two times during two successive campaigns in Elam (Elam 4 and 5) against king Ummanaldas, together with many other Elamite cities. It is not mentioned in the epigraph lists. It was rendered a second time in the reliefs of the palace among the slabs fallen in Room S, differently depicted and again identified by an epigraph. More about it will be discussed in the case study of Room F further in the thesis.

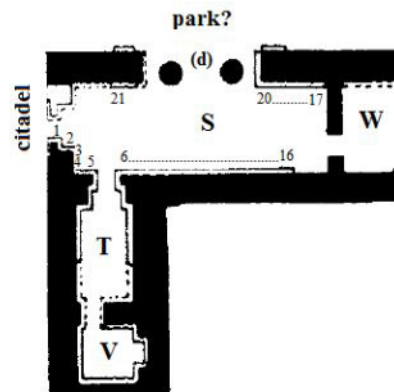
### **5.3. Western portico: Rooms S, T and V**

A series of passages connected the center of the palace with the lower western portal composed of Rooms S – a large room with a portico entrance, decorated with narrative as well as non-narrative reliefs; the small Room T, which functioned as a vestibule, was not decorated, but was protected at its entrance by apotropaic figures; and smallest Room V, also undecorated, having a niche on one of its walls and functioning most likely as bathroom.

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<sup>312</sup> Cf. Barnett who believed it to be not a bathroom, but a “small domestic shrine of some kind, as would seem indicated by the recess”, 1976: 39. For Room F as bathroom see the discussion further down in this thesis in Chapter 3.

**Room S** (Barnett Pl. XLIV-LIV) included two columns forming a portico at its entrance. It functioned as the large hall of a western access way to the royal residence from the lower end of the Kuyunjik mound. The doorway (d), centrally positioned on the broad wall, was guarded by large figures facing outside, sculpted on both jambs, of which only one slab was recovered by the excavators.



**Fig. 4.** Individual plan of the Northwest suit  
(after G. Turner's reconstructed plan in Barnett, 1976: 28).

The slab on the doorjamb depicts four figures: *Lulal*, *ugallu*, followed by two more *ugallu* facing each other.<sup>313</sup> At the base of the slab with the protective figures, in a niche, a set of five small dog-clay figurines were discovered. They were of different colors and were inscribed with their names or functions: a white dog – “do not consider, make your bite”; a black dog – “strong is his bark”; a red dog – “who overcomes the enemy”; a green-blue dog – “who bites his foe”; and finally a white dog with reddish spots named “who makes evil go out”.<sup>314</sup> Ten such figurines are prescribed by ritual texts, with two of each different color, in the same fashion as the dogs in Room S. The texts ascribe them similar names.<sup>315</sup> We can assume that other five dog figurines were buried at the foundation of the other door jamb. The dogs shared the same apotropaic functions as the protective figures on the slab. Judging by their names, the dogs, much like the animals themselves, were believed to bark and bite enemies which would try to enter the palace with no good intent.<sup>316</sup> The texts ascribe them

<sup>313</sup> The ritual texts prescribe such a pose for the clay figurines meant to be buried at the outer door of a house, so that “the breast of the evil one and the enemy will be turned away”. See Wiggermann, 1992: 33 (lines 435-440).

<sup>314</sup> Barnett, 1976: 36.

<sup>315</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 14-15 (lines 191-205).

<sup>316</sup> Watanabe, 2002: 119-120.



the location of the outer gates and doors of a house,<sup>317</sup> much like the facing pair of *ugallu* represented on the slab above. While the latter figures, impressive in size, were supposed to be viewed and inspire awe, the dogs were concealed from public eye, but both types shared the same function. Apparently another secondary exit existed on the outer narrow wall, facing the open space on the mound, but it is not known whether it contained any decoration.

Two groups of reliefs were recovered from the room, one of which was retrieved from a higher level on the floor and is therefore presumed to have fallen or ended up there from somewhere else/ above (Room S<sup>1</sup>). The group of reliefs lower in the floor level belonged to the room itself. The arrangement in the reliefs of both groups is identical for the most part – three registers separated by narrow bands. The subject matter is also the same – hunting. One scene is almost identical (Slabs 11-14, upper register in Room S and slabs E-C, upper register in Room S<sup>1</sup>), while others seem to be variations on the same theme. But there are also a great number of differences, as shall become clear from the discussion of Room S here and the fallen reliefs in the next chapter.

From the surviving slabs it appears that each wall of Room S was dedicated to one subject concerned with hunting, interrupted by a doorway. Mostly the reliefs on the walls opposite the main entrance survive, arranged on both sides of the door to Room T (slabs 3-5 and slabs 6-16). Little is kept from the wall to the right from the entrance (d) (fragment of slab 21 and slabs 17-18). The recovered reliefs show three series concerned with hunting, with scenes arranged in three registers.

a) One series of reliefs ascribed to the small wall towards Room T (slabs 3-5) showed the king hunting from the boat, charging arrows at an attacking lioness, while from both sides of the water course attendants with hounds chased the animals out of the vegetation. The lioness may be the same animal shown chased out of the vegetation and taking a leap towards the water. A male lion is shown having already been captured and tied at the side of the boat. The hunt is set in the wilderness, in a watery landscape with trees. The register arrangement here looks more like a main, larger band in the middle, showing the watercourse and the king, framed at the top and bottom by narrower bands showing strips of land. The action is shown running away from the entrance to Room T and oriented towards the second access way on the side of Room S (opening to the citadel). The boat of the king is followed by another one transporting the royal horses, suggesting that the hunt was going to take place both on water

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<sup>317</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 53 (25.25).

and on land. The front part of the royal boat is sculptured as to render a tall animal head, while the rear part is curved towards the inside. It seems to have been propelled by eight pairs of oars, disposed on two levels. The following boat seems to be much simpler than that. The boats rendered in other reliefs concerned with attacks of cities in watery regions, are of a completely different type, always the same, looking more like curved rafts (in Rooms J, G or F).

b) After the space of the doorway to Room T, a second series started (slabs 6-16). The action on the edge slab 6 was oriented in the opposite direction from the previous series, heading towards Room W. This arrangement shows that doorways functioned as end-lines of the narratives. The narratives are now arranged in three equal and clearly distinguished registers separated by horizontal narrow bands. The reliefs of this series are very similar in many respects to the fallen reliefs concerned with hunting.

The narrative in the preserved upper register shows several hunting episodes (concerned only with lions), but most are fragmentary. The king is shown testing bows arranged in a pile in front of him by prostrating Elamite attendants. One of them kisses the ground and another one stands on his knees with his hands raised; he is shown holding an upright spear and stretching one arm in front of him. In another instance the king is represented killing a lion with his spear. One sequence of the hunt (slabs 11-14) has an identical rendering in the fallen reliefs. A continuous movement is shown: a lion is released from a cage, is hit by the king's arrow, but does not die; when the animal takes his final jump, the king stabs him at close range with his sword and kills him (the interpretation is explained by the counterpart of this scene in the fallen reliefs which contains an epigraph identifying the action). In many instances, Elamite figures are visible in the king's suite. The king is always rendered slightly taller than his attendants.

In the middle register the narration of the only surviving full episode (also concerned only with lions) suggests a "reading" from left to right (slabs 14-11): in one scene the king on horseback slays a lion with his spear (slab 13) and in the following scene he is shown in a different, ankle long robe, holding his spear upwards, while inspecting slain lions presented to him by his retinue (slab 11). Behind the retinue, other attendants bow down to the ground. If in the upper register the episode shows scenes in immediate sequence, in the middle register the scenes, although in logical order, are separated by a certain time, as the king appears in different garments, more suited for a ceremonial act.

The lower register showed the king and his retinue hunting gazelles with the bow from a hiding pit and wild donkeys by shooting arrows from horseback.

It seems that on the long wall one register contained more scenes which were delineated through a visual device: each scene was defined by change of direction and was framed by elements positioned back-to-back. Pairs of horses, for example, are set backing each other, with their tails intersecting, in order to separate the gazelle hunt from the donkey hunt in the lower register. Each scene is framed at the left side by the king (followed by his attendants), always shown facing rightwards,<sup>318</sup> and by an attendant or his animal victim facing him at the right side. More scenes composed a full episode (trying out bows, followed by the actual hunt, or hunting with spear, followed by inspection of carcasses). However, with many reliefs missing, we don't know the full range of episodes on the long wall in Room S.

c) The third series of reliefs in Room S is composed of slabs 17-18 to the left from the main entrance, and slab 21, to its right, show hunting scenes of deer and stags in a landscape marked by scale patterns, trees and reeds; the animals are chased into the direction of Room W in slabs 17-18, where the royal attendants are setting nets to engulf them, while in slab 21 men carrying a slain stag move in the opposite direction, towards the side entrance of the room. This again shows that the doorways separated the threads of narration. In the case of these fragmentary reliefs it is not clear what the register arrangement looked like.

Since apparently there was no single order of "reading" the episodes, it can be imagined that an unacquainted visitor would have encountered problems in making too much sense of them without a guide explaining. However, the mechanism of using change of direction and framing the scenes at one end with the royal image would have been enough for orienting the gaze. The king is always rendered in a slightly larger size than the rest of the figures and his garments, even with the crown missing, are minutely rendered. These would have been enough to draw the attention towards the main protagonist of the scenes – the king. To make things easier, the royal figure is rendered a great number of times across the reliefs in Room S: nine times in the surviving reliefs alone and most certainly one more time preceding the royal attendants in slab 10 in the middle register, where the royal mace was preserved. Slabs 12-13, placed right across the main entrance, depict the king as many as five times, across all three registers, sometimes in superimposed scenes with a certain disparity. He is depicted

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<sup>318</sup> One exception may be the king's rendering on a fragment, which Barnett proposes to ascribe to slab 9, Barnett, 1976: Pl. LIII and p. 52.

predominantly in association with lion hunt – only slabs 17-21 and the lower register of slabs 6-16 are concerned with other animals (deer, gazelles, and wild donkeys), while the other two registers of slabs 6-16, as well as slabs 3-5 show him in lion hunt activities. Throughout the whole room, the king is hunting only on foot, never from the chariot.

At all times, the king is shown without the tall pointed crown. Instead, he wears a head band with ribbons hanging down the back, much like the depictions of the Crown Prince Ashurbanipal and his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin on the sides of Esarhaddon's steles set in Til Barsip and Sam'al,<sup>319</sup> or the Crown Prince on the walls of Sargon II's palace. It has been suggested that it is in fact Ashurbanipal as Crown Prince that was represented in this room.<sup>320</sup> The visual would thus be put in accordance with the claims formulated in his building inscription, which emphasized a continuous and harmonious line of princeship and kingship. The strongest evidence against this comes from the palace itself. That the protagonist in Room S is still to be identified with the king and not the Crown Prince is suggested by a scene in the fallen S<sup>1</sup> reliefs where the king reclining on his couch is rendered again without the crown, but with a headband with flowing ribbons. The inscription on one fragment in the room renders the speech of the king in first person, testifying to a royal banquet, whose main figure could only be the king (see discussion on the banquet scene in Room S<sup>1</sup> in the next chapter). Traditionally, when the Crown Prince is rendered in reliefs, he is always associated with the figure of the king who is the protagonist of all the actions at all times (on Esarhaddon's stele as well as in Sargon's palace).

An interesting part of the king's regalia, visible throughout the royal depictions in the room, is a stylus held at his belt (throughout slabs 16-13, Barnett, Pl. LII). The stylus is always positioned on the king's right side, while to his left he wears a sword. The king is shown with the stylus in other rooms as well, in scenes concerned with royal hunt, whenever he is shown facing rightwards (Room C or the reliefs fallen in Room S). It is difficult to estimate if the stylus was conceived only in association with royal hunt and made sense only

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<sup>319</sup> On three stelae of Esarhaddon, set in two capitals of the Northwestern parts of the realm (two stele in Til Barsip and one in Sam'al), both Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin, his two sons, are depicted on the sides of the monuments wearing a head diadem with bands streaming down the back. As such, they have been identified as the heir princes: Ashurbanipal as heir prince of the throne of Assyria and Šamaš-šumu-ukin as the heir of the throne of Babylon, under Assyrian domination. See Porter, 2003: 72-73; 74-75.

<sup>320</sup> Zamazalova, 2011: 326.

in this context,<sup>321</sup> it seems however to have been no contradiction between learning and prowess as a hunter. In military scenes, where the only royal pose is standing in his chariot, even when the king is shown facing rightwards, his side is always covered by the chariot driver. What is certain is that the stylus as part of the regalia and its depiction in reliefs is another novelty encountered in the royal image constructed in the North Palace.

There were no epigraphs attached to the scenes in Room S. The lack of epigraphs may indicate a still important and very much exposed to sight space, but transitory in nature, where a person would not linger too long either to read the inscriptions or to have them read. If so, Room S was conceived as a monumental entrance hall, but not a reception room proper. It may be also that the lack of epigraphs indicates that the reliefs were not completely finished and a phase with the introduction of the inscriptions never took place. The fact that an identical scene located in another space received an inscription which explained the action (the killing of a lion released from the cage), suggests that the visuals were not deemed so easy to understand even by their creators.

On the opposite wall from the entrance, Room S communicated with a small chamber, **Room T** (Barnett, Pl. LV) and smaller **Room V**. The reliefs found here seem to have originated, like one set of reliefs in Room S, from somewhere else (T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup> reliefs). Room T was guarded at its entrance by a set of creatures arranged on two registers on either side of the doorjamb: *Lulal*, *ugallu* and a pair of other two *ugallu* facing each other were rendered in the upper register and *urmahlullu* in the lower register. The configuration in the upper register is identical to the arrangement at the portico entrance. The *urmahlullu* figure appears in the decoration of a niche in Room F. Like the latter, Room V, a small, square chamber, contained a niche in one of its walls. The niche, as it will be discussed in more detail in the treatment of Room F as case study, supports the idea of this room functioning as bathroom. Neither Room T, nor Room V contained reliefs of their own. This suggests either that the rooms were never finished, or that they were never intended to be decorated. This may further indicate that they were not meant for public use. Because the portico rendered Room S a rather open character, D. Kertai proposes that Rooms T and V functioned to

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<sup>321</sup> S. Zamazalova argues for a connection between lion hunt and stylus in Ashurbanipal's rendering: the reliefs sought to emphasize the king's personal relationship with the scribal arts, because the performance of the hunt as ritual act implied knowledge of the mythological and ideological aspects of the king's role. Zamazalova, 2011: 326-327. However, as shown in the Room S reliefs, the king is shown with the stylus also when hunting gazelles and donkeys, in connection with which there are no ceremonials recorded.

accommodate some personnel in charge with the access through the entrance.<sup>322</sup> However, it appears it was important that the space contained in these rooms be protected by apotropaic figures, and the two facing *ugallu* in the figure configuration, ascribed by the ritual texts for the outer gates, suggest that Room S was viewed as an outer space.

#### **5.4. Passages and corridors: Rooms D, C, E, A, R, W and K**

The various quarters of the palace were connected through a system of small passage halls (Rooms D and W) and longer or shorter corridors, at the heart of which seems to have been Room D. The latter opened in four directions: through Room C it reached the central court J, through Room E it reached unknown suites to the Northwest side of the palace, through passage A and descending through R it reached the lower western portal, and opposite passage E, it communicated with the suite B, P, Q through hall B. Around the staircase of the throne room suite circulated a newly introduced passage K, connecting the central court with the also newly introduced suite B, P, Q.<sup>323</sup>

**Room D**, a small, square hall at the crossroad of the inner passages, was found too destroyed at the time of the excavations and nothing is known as whether it contained any decoration or not. All passages leading off from it contained reliefs concerned with hunting and park activities, except for Room B, whose relief did not survive; therefore it may be assumed that, if it did bore any decoration, Room D may have been concerned with hunting or park activities as well.

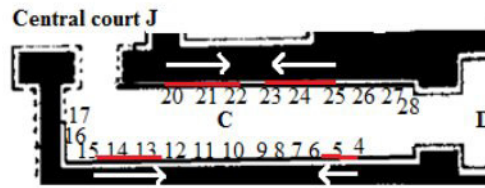
**Room C** (Barnett Pl. V-XIII), a rather long, rectangular room, was decorated with scenes of royal hunt, concerned only with lions. The scenes were displayed throughout the whole surface of the slabs and in only one case in two registers (slab 16 to the corner of the room). Its entrance from Room D did not contain any protective figures, arguing for an inner character of the space; the entrance from court J was not recovered.

On the longest wall the visual narrative seems to start from the entrance of Room D with the preparations for the hunt (slabs 1-8). At the center of this episode stands the large figure of the king in his chariot, rendered on three quarters of the register's height (slab 5).

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<sup>322</sup> Kertai, 2015: 179.

<sup>323</sup> For the ensemble of the communicative system of passages and halls in the North Palace, see plan in **Pl.3**.



**Fig. 5.** Individual plan of passages C (after G. Turner's reconstructed plan in Barnett, 1976: 28).  
Red marks indicate the slabs with the king; white arrows show the orientation of the royal pose.

The chariot, standing still, is oriented rightwards, pointing to the direction of the actual hunting episode. To the left from the royal chariot, attendants are preparing the weapons and a bow is handed over to the king. To the right from the chariot are rows of royal bearded guards with upright spears and beardless attendants of smaller size (children?) with poles and sticks. Between these rows the royal horses are being brought along (slabs 8-7) in one sequence and attached to the chariot in the next, in a visual device which created the effect of a continuous action. The king, wearing his pointed crown, is shown visibly larger than the bearded men attending him in the chariot. The large size of the royal pose on the register and the larger size of the king himself among his attendants help first to draw the attention of the viewer towards this point and then to emphasize the protagonist of the action. It also translated visually the higher status of the king.

Next, civilians are shown rushing to watch the royal hunt from a wooded hill (slabs 8-9). At the top of the wooded hill stands a gate-like construction with crenels on top and it encapsulates a circular stele. On the stele there is a chariot in motion, depicted in small size. From the chariot the king, recognizable by the royal pointed crown, is shown in the act of killing a pursuing lion with a spear. A proposed interpretation of this detail is that what the viewer is presented is in fact a slab with a relief on the far side of a chamber beyond an open door way.<sup>324</sup> As we have seen, a similar rendering appears in the reliefs of Room H, with a crenellated gate-like edifice containing a stele with the royal depiction. In both cases, such a gate is associated with the existence of a wooded park. The citizens are hurrying to the spot of the hunting, but which has not yet began, close to the royal palace. I would argue that, in the logic of the chronological sequences of the reliefs in Room C (this scene stands between the preparation episode and the actual close-up depiction of the hunt), it makes more sense if what the viewer is shown at this point is the actual hunt taking place, beyond the gate, under

<sup>324</sup> See Albenda, 1976: 53. The author argues that the Assyrian artist eliminated details such as the walls of the building containing the relief, in order to emphasize what was important for the viewer to see.

the eyes of the Nineveh spectators. The synthesis of the whole action is condensed in one scene alone, which also facilitates the introduction of another element attached to the royal hunt – a spectator public.

On the following slabs (9-17) the actual hunt is depicted. The hunting setting is framed by Assyrian archers and spearmen arranged in two rows, who make up a wall with their shields (slabs 9 and 17). Within these confines, the direction of movement of all figures is from right to left (towards Room D). The different sequences of the hunt are shown simultaneously. A lion is released from a cage on slab 16, on the small wall opposite the entrance from Room D. Lions and lionesses, distributed across the whole surface of the slabs, are shown already dead, pierced by arrows on slab 15. On slabs 14-13 we reach the king in his speeding chariot, aiming his arrows at the animals ahead of him, while his attendants push back a wounded lion attacking at the rear. The king is rendered on the full height of the panel wearing his tall pointed crown. A lion is trampled over by the running horses. The animals preceding the royal chariot are either already dead or about to die. Attendants with hunting dogs keep the approaching wounded and dying lions at bay in slab 10.

It is interesting to note that the depiction of the king in full action was positioned on slabs 14-13, opposite the entrance from the central court, with a small deviation to the right (as seen by the visitor transiting from the court), which corresponds to the visitor's route on the way towards Room D. This and the fact that the royal pose is rendered on the full height of the slab, would have definitely captured the eyes of the passer by. The orientation of the king was in the same direction with the guests' way through the passage.

From slab 17 only the beginning is known. What followed after it to the end of the short wall is not known. The wall of soldiers of the fragmentary slab 17, corresponding to the similar arrangement on slab 9, suggests it worked as frame line for the hunting episode.

However, the other long wall displayed two more actions of the king in the lion hunt, in a rather peculiar manner. The slabs at the entrance from court J are not known. The fragmentary slab towards the entrance from Room D (slab 28) shows a lion cage, similar to the depiction on slab 16. In between, two more times the king is shown slaying the animals from his chariot, this time not aiming ahead, but dealing with a pursuing lion attacking at the rear. On slabs 20-21 the king slays the animal with his dagger in the throat, while on slabs 23-24 he pierces the lion with the spear. All around the two depictions are wounded or already dead lions. The two scenes with the king are depicted at a very close distance from one



another, and the direction of movement is actually towards one another (see Fig. 10 above). The fact that the animals all around are shown pierced by arrows, while the king is holding other weapons than the bow, suggests that these are two later moments, following the scenes on the other wall (where the king uses only the bow). The antagonistic direction of movement suggests also that it is not a display of continuous sequences, but two separate steps rendered at the same time. Some effect of symmetry was achieved from these two facing depictions of the king, which corresponded to the middle part of the wall. Both times a lion is shown badly wounded close to the chariot, the chariot is attacked at the rear by another animal, and a third lion is trampled by the horses. Between the two renderings a wounded male lion and a dead lioness are introduced.

The reliefs in Room C point to a few observations. Several techniques are used in rendering as many aspects of the royal hunt as possible. On one wall they showed the aspects concerned with preparations, setting and audience, as well as the actual hunt having the bow as weapon (the bow the king is shown receiving from his attendants in the preparation scene). The succession of consecutive episodes of an action was thus depicted. Within this frame, a second technique was introduced – consecutive images of the same characters to produce a continuous movement (horses are being brought towards the royal chariot by three men, flowed immediately by the king's chariot with three men handling the horses attached to it). On a second wall, once the setting and audience had already been established, the artists dealt only with the other two weapons the king makes use of in the hunt – dagger and lance. A chronological and logical connection between the two series was suggested by the presence of the arrows which had already pierced the animals. In this case the culminating point of an action was represented to stand for the whole action; the accompanying details suggest easily what had previously happened and what will be the outcome – a skillful hunter and dead or dying victims all around.

The placement of reliefs in the room seems to have been done with the architectural features and perhaps the function of the space in mind. The length, narrowness and location recommend Room C as a passage and the four royal poses seem to have been positioned bearing this function in mind. Coming from court J, the eyes rested right from the entrance on the large depiction of the king with the bow on the opposite wall, positioned at close range. The remaining three royal poses would have revealed themselves as the visitor advanced on the way to Room D, two times at the center of the room on one wall, and again towards the exit on the other wall. Coming from Room D, the royal poses are positioned as to avoid the

opposite wall, which was too far away for a clear sight, and the immediate walls at the entrance, which made a dead angle.

The complete lack of epigraphs, like in the case of the portico Room S, suggests that the visitors would have been in passing and the space was not conceived with longer staying in mind. It may also imply that the room was not finished, the epigraphs following to be added in a later phase. However, even without studying too intensely the reliefs, the large figures of the king handling different weapons and the incredibly vivid details of the animal suffering would have made a clear point about the protagonist of the narrative. Great care was taken to render the rage and the suffering of the animals, like never before in the palatial reliefs: a lion, for example, is rendered pierced by arrows and coughing blood, while a lioness, hit in the lower part of the back, is shown dragging her paralyzed rear paws (slabs 25-26). The effect of suffering was all the more augmented by the red color which must have covered the streams of blood carved in their bodies or coughed out from their pierced lungs. Each animal is rendered in a different way, even when the two poses are similar (a lion coughing blood is rendered two times, in slabs 13 and 25, but with differentiating details). These details, of course, speak for a refined artistry, but they function to emphasize the superlative capacities of the king: he is capable of putting to death even the most enraged lions and engage with a significant number of animals at the same time (represented at the same time wearing the stylus at the waist). The great diversity of details makes each victim an individual and confers authenticity and naturalism to the horrid sight.

The royal retinue taking part in the hunt, from chasing off the lions, to driving the royal chariot, include both bearded and beardless men – in slab 14, for example, both a bearded man and a beardless one ride with the king in his chariot, keeping at bay with their spears a lion attacking the rear of the royal vehicle. Beardless men dealing with weapons are not known in other palatial representations preceding the North Palace. If this should be understood as changes in the court protocol (beardless eunuchs fulfilling a larger range of tasks, including handling weapons in certain circumstances) remains unknown.

An architectural peculiarity in this room is a rounded cut in one of the relief (on slab 21, between the two representations of the king shown facing each other), on the wall adjacent to Room G. However, it did not communicate with the room on the other side. The orifice might have played a role in the ventilation system, leading not to the adjacent room, but towards the roof. As such, this would argue for the fact that Room C was roofed.

Apparently, according to Rassam's writings, the room also revealed traces of wall painting, which he says, were placed above the reliefs, they themselves showing scenes of hunt or warfare.<sup>325</sup> Considering that the slabs with reliefs in Room C varied between 155 cm, the shortest, to 162 cm the tallest, painted scenes positioned above them would have still been visible. If they indeed exist however, one question would be the relationship between the painted scenes and the reliefs within the program of the room (all the more if they were war scenes). Unfortunately, such details are known only from vague 19 century recordings.

The fact that its walls were lavishly decorated means that the passage played an important role and was meant to be seen. This is understandable by its location at the center of the palace and its function as main connector of the central court to the rest of the communication system. Whatever activities were ascribed to Room C, they were deemed fit to take place in an environment depicting the king in association with lion hunt (and lions alone) in poses which required him equipped with all the royal insignia, from the royal crown to the royal chariot. Among the regalia adorning Ashurbanipal the stylus appears again (as in Room S) at the king's side (slab 24, Pl. XII). Another particular aspect of Room C is that a part of Ashurbanipal's library was found in it, showing that at some point the room was used in such purposes. Most definitely it was ascribed this function secondarily, testifying for the adaption of spaces to the various punctual needs of one or another moment. No archives of official documents were found in this room, or anywhere else in the recovered parts of the North Palace for that matter.

**Passage E** (Barnett Pl. XIV-XV) is only partially known. It opened from junction hall D and ensured communication between the inner parts of the palace with its southwestern parts and led probably to the suite of rooms S<sup>1</sup>, T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup>. Passage E, rather long and narrow, similar to passage C by all appearances, backed the secondary reception suite (running parallel to Room H); the space beyond it would have allowed for yet another suite. Very little survives of its decoration. The scenes were depicted on the full height of the slabs. It was adorned with scenes of musicians, tamed lions and attendants with mastiffs in a park. The park contains palm trees, needle trees, grapevines and lily-like tall flowers. The whole setting is reminiscent of the arrangement of the banquet scene in Room S<sup>1</sup>. The flowers are similar to the one the king holds in his hand as he reclines on the couch at his banquet. One scene (slabs 8-7) showed a lion couple resting in the garden; the lioness is lying on her belly, facing towards

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<sup>325</sup> Rassam, 1897: 28.

the right and away from Room D, while the male is standing on all four paws, looking over the lioness, in the opposite direction. From this direction musicians with a tamed lion come, and the animal is walking freely along with them (slab 5). The lion is shown turning his head to look back and one of the musicians is depicted wearing a feathered crown on the head. These surviving slabs are from the Southeast wall and they show movement away from Room D. From the opposite wall only a fragment is known (slab 13?), which shows beardless attendants with sticks and dogs on the leash walking rightwards, in the direction of Room D.

**Passages A** (Barnett Pl. II-III) and **R** (Barnett Pl. XXXIX-XLIII), descending towards the portico in the West wing, displayed the royal retinue going to the hunt in a descending movement on one wall, and returning from the successful hunt in an ascending movement on the other. The royal attendants in Rooms A and R are all beardless men holding weapons such as bows and spears, together with hunting nets and other equipment. Few characters distinguish themselves from the majority by their slightly smaller size, different hairdo (somehow shorter) and dress (knee-long all around, in comparison to the kilt worn by the others, which is somewhat longer in the back). Also, they seem to be barefoot, when all the rest are wearing knee-long boots. They are leading the horses by their bridle or the hunting dogs (slabs 3-8 in Room R). It may be that they are youngsters taking part in the royal hunt, as we have already seen in Room C in the preparation scene. The hunt they were returning from was concerned mostly with lions, although two attendants carry a rabbit and birds (slab 27). A similar rendering is found on a passageway in Sennacherib's palace (Room LI), located in similar position and leading to the edge of the mound, decorated with a procession of horses being led away (descending) on one wall and food and animal bearers (birds and rabbits) coming into the palace (ascending) on the opposite wall.<sup>326</sup>

No rendering of the royal image survived from the reliefs of these passages, if they ever contained any. Neither do they contain any epigraphs, but in this case the representations are more than easy to follow.

**Room W**, a small liaison chamber between the portico room S and the ascending passages, was guarded at its entrance from Room S by a pair of two hybrid figures: a creature with lizard-like head, lion body and bird feet, identified from the ritual texts as *mušhuššu*

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<sup>326</sup> Russell, 1991: 69, 168 with Fig. 87. In Sennacherib's palace, all the attendants depicted in this passage are bearded.

(“furious snake”),<sup>327</sup> followed by the *uridimmu*— a bearded man with horned tiara and lower part of a lion (Barnett Pl. LIV). While the latter appeared in other configurations at the doorways throughout the palace, the former is known only from this context in the North Palace (still others may have existed elsewhere in the unexcavated areas). Neither does it appear in the palace reliefs of Ashurbanipal’s predecessors. The ritual texts recommended that the clay figurines of this type be buried under the threshold of a room, but its attributes are not mentioned. The creature is better known from its repeated representations, together with the figure of a bull, on the painted glazed bricks adorning the Gate of Ishtar in Babylon at the time of Nebuchadnezzar II (in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), which connected the royal palace to the *bīt akitu* (an edifice where the New Year festivities were celebrated). Placed on the gate, the monster had a door-keeping function in the Babylonian palace of Nebuchadnezzar II. Its attributes are stressed by an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II’s successor, Neriglissar, which mentions the casting of seven such bronze figures meant to spatter the enemy with venom.<sup>328</sup> The rest of the chamber contained no decorations. This suggests its function was only to control and limit the access from the portal to the heart of the palace, equilibrating the open character of the access Room S.

**Room K** (Barnett Pl. XXXI) is a novelty in the palatial organization of space. It opened from the central court J and went around the staircase of the throne room, ending in Room P and directly at the columned entrance to Room B. Because it apparently worked to ensure communication between this latter suite of rooms and the central court, its existence must be connected to this newly appeared suite unknown in previous palatial plans. The only economy of space passage K provides when compared to passage C, which it doubles, is that it avoids Rooms B, D and C. Although located right behind the throne room, passage K was not decorated, suggesting perhaps that it was a secondary passage. Still it was important enough to have its entrance from the inner court J guarded by a pair of protecting figures; curiously, its other end in Room P did not contain any, while Room B opening nearby from the same Room P did have guardian figures at its doorway. The apotropaic figures standing

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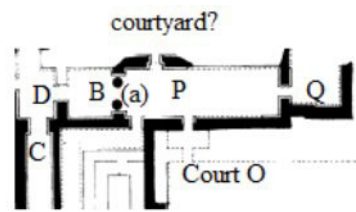
<sup>327</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 14-15 (line 185); 49 (15.16); 168-169 (3). The author argues that, after the conquest of Eshnunna by Hammurabi, where *mušhuššu* was associated with the patron god Tišpak, the dragon-like creature becomes associated with Marduk and his son Nabû, the great gods of Babylon. From here, with Sennacherib’s conquest of Babylon, the *mušhuššu* passes in the company of Assyria’s supreme god Assur.

<sup>328</sup> Watanabe, 2002: 122-123.

guard for passage K were *Lulal* and *ugallu*, a configuration which appears also at the doorway of an inner space, bathroom F.

### 5.5. The northeastern suite: Rooms B, P and Q

This ensemble of spaces revealed a long rectangular hall divided in two segments (Rooms B and P) by a columned wall and a third space, Room Q, whose plan is unfortunately not complete.



**Fig. 6.** Individual plan of suite of Rooms B, P, Q  
(after G. Turner's reconstructed plan in Barnett, 1976: 28).

The suite was positioned perpendicular to the throne room area, but Room Q seems to have expanded upwards. Room P is of very large size, comparable to the throne room.

Apparently, only **Room B** contained relief slabs, but they were reported as completely damaged and their subject matter remains unknown. Because it joined Room D (also destroyed), which further communicated with several passages decorated all with hunting and garden scenes, it may be possible that room B displayed such subjects as well. The other two rooms contained blank stone slabs.

The access way between Rooms P and B, doorway (a), was flanked on both sides by slabs containing protective figures facing Room P: *Lulal*, *ugallu*, and *lahmu*. The same figures and in the same configuration stood guard on the door jambs of the throne room itself (Room M) at its main central entrance from the outer court O. This latter aspect, the existence of reliefs in Room B and its columned entrance of a portico-like type suggest an important and, to some extent, monumental entrance. They also show that **Room B** functioned as access way into the inner part of the royal residence, while the undecorated Rooms P and Q were reserved for other types of activities, considered more external. Room P, opening on all its four directions (with two doorways in one case), seems to have functioned as a crossroad

hall, but a very large one. It can be postulated that Rooms P and Q were never finished, or that whatever function they served, decoration in their case was not necessary.

Another aspect is that Rooms P and Q are aligned along the outer court O. Usually, the outer court accommodates, albeit in other positions, administrative offices, which are never decorated with reliefs. Because this suite has no counterpart in any other late Assyrian palace, it is hard to estimate its function, but it is noticeable that the route from the court O through Rooms P-B-C would have offered an alternative communication between the outer court and the central, inner court without having to pass through the throne room suite (same as the parallel passage K).

To summarize, the North Palace comported some special features; the most remarkable of them was the undecorated throne room façade, which normally would have impressed the visitor with monumental colossi and decoration. It is improbable that the explanation resides in the unfinished state of the palace – the throne room and the throne room façade were the most important and most public space of the palace, directly connected to the king enthroned. It is doubtful that there would have been more preoccupation in decorating inner passages in the detriment of the throne room façade. By the time of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, the bull colossi remained the most important elements conferring monumentality to the palace entrances and façades (tributary processions and hero with lion had been discarded). In the North Palace, however, they dropped out of use. The *Sebetti* figures at the main entrance would have been too small to be noticed from anywhere else but from close range. Instead of monumental colossi, the small rendition of the *Sebetti* was preferred, perhaps connected both to their apotropaic and warrior functions. It may be that the monumentality of the suite was perceived through the newly introduced set of stairs, which would have separated the throne room from the outer court and would have created a vertical distance from visitors to the king (although certainly not significant in actual terms, as the stairs couldn't have been too high). The throne room itself retained the very large size of such representative spaces. The throne room suite was decorated only with military subjects; in the throne room proper it covered the complex aspects of the Babylonian rebellion with the defeat of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and its Elamite involvements and in the retiring room the Arab affairs. The throne room also accommodated the campaigns against Egypt, with no connection to the Babylonian rebellion. Connected to the uprisings generated either by the Gambulu affair shortly preceding the Babylonian rebellion or to the rebellion proper, the central court was also decorated with military campaigns in southern Babylonia. The secondary suite in the proximity of the throne

room was also monumental in size. It too was decorated with military affairs concerned only with Elamite encounters; those which can be identified are the Teumman and Gambulu affairs in its reception room (I); perhaps the Elam 3 episodes with the many changes on the Elamite throne and the flight of Tammartu II to Nineveh (H); and one of the campaigns against Ummanaldas with the capture of Hamanu (F). Room I had decorated floors similar to the throne room proper. The fact that different spaces in the suite, from reception room to bathroom were all decorated with military scenes show that the subject matter was not correlated with the functionality of the space, but maybe, if any, with the status of the suite as a whole. Given its proximity to the throne room and its monumentality, the ensemble may have played the role of a representative space for the royal figure. However, it was separated from the throne room suite, with no communicating passage between the two. The only connecting space was the central court. The main passages of the palace were concerned with scenes of royal hunt and park activities. However, different passages were ascribed different types of actions related to hunting and park activities and lacked epigraphs. Only Rooms C and S showed the hunt proper, were exclusively concerned with emphasizing the king and their visual devices were more varied and complex (but still not in need of epigraph explanations). Passage E showed peaceful images in the park, but no royal depiction. Passage A-R alluded to the hunt but did not show it and most probably never showed the king either. Room C depicted the king four times, always in the chariot: once preparing for the hunt, and three other times showing the different weapons he made use of (bow, dagger and spear). In all cases he is portrayed wearing the Assyrian crown. Room S depicted the king many more times in various poses and with various weapons, but always without the crown. Secondary passages and liaison halls were not decorated, but protected by guardian figures. It seems that the scenes of the reliefs were conceived with their location in mind and with conspicuous places either for the depiction of the king or for some culminating, tension inducing scene. The protective figures seem to have been positioned mostly independently from their ascription by the ritual texts, with no particular pattern of distribution throughout the palace. Except for the *Sebbeti* – positioned only at the main entrance to the palace, no new figure is newly introduced; rather the North Palace drops completely the winged figures with cone and bucket, initially associated with the stylized tree (Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II) and then retained without the tree in Sennacherib's palace.



## **VI. Reliefs out of context (Reliefs S<sup>1</sup> and V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>)**

Reliefs which did not originally belong to the West portico rooms S, V and T were found on their floors. It was assumed that, since the West wing was positioned six meters lower than the common ground of the palace, these reliefs must have fallen there from rooms positioned above the portal, set on the common level with the rest of the palace. Another misplaced slab was recovered from passage R (Barnett, Pl. LXVIII, slab E). These reliefs are treated as a separate chapter because the rooms they stemmed from, their appearance or location are not known. They are thus considered out of their original architectural context. As it happens, all reliefs fallen or recovered from Room S (S<sup>1</sup> reliefs) shared the same tripartite register arrangement, while those from Rooms T, V and the fragment in passage R (generally labeled T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup> reliefs) were all arranged in two registers.

The S<sup>1</sup> reliefs displayed four subject matters: three slabs depicted scenes with royal lion hunt on foot (Barnett, Pl. LVI-LIX, slabs C-E); one slab and some fragments show royal lion hunt from chariot (slabs A-B); four slabs (with one of large width) showed warfare scenes and connected activities (Barnett, Pl. LX-LXI and Pl. LXVI); and lastly, five slabs (all fragmentary) rendered scenes of banqueting and garden setting (Barnett, Pl. LXIII-XLIV). The seven T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup> reliefs (Barnett, Pl. LXVII-LXIX) all show scenes of warfare and connected actions.

The following discussion is structured on the two large groups of reliefs generated by the register arrangement and place of recovery, corresponding to S<sup>1</sup> reliefs (two-register slabs, recovered from Room S) and T<sup>1</sup>/ V<sup>1</sup> reliefs (three-register slabs, recovered from Rooms T and V, and one similar to them recovered from Room R).

### **6.1. The S<sup>1</sup> reliefs**

If all the reliefs fallen into Room S (Barnett Pl. LVI-LXVI) belonged to the same original space, this would have displayed not one, but three themes on its walls.<sup>329</sup> The narratives were organized in three registers and were concerned with royal lion hunt, military campaigns, and royal banquet. Although the rule in the North Palace, seems to have been one subject per room, it is not uncommon to have spaces with multiple subjects. Ashurnasirpal

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<sup>329</sup> The reliefs fallen in Room S were analyzed as belonging to one single room by P. Albenda, 1976-1977.

II's throne room showed scenes of lion and bull hunt, together with military affairs and the king with protective figures and stylized tree.<sup>330</sup> Spaces with multiple subjects were also designed in Sennacherib's palace. They were ascribed to two courtyards (VI and LXIV), one of which was the central court, and to a large reception room of a monumental suite (Room 43).<sup>331</sup> The throne room of the North Palace itself, as we shall see, displayed more military campaigns. However, these are all large spaces, rather than relatively small rooms as would have probably been in the case of an upper storey.

None of the three series of subjects from the slabs fallen in Room S was recovered in complete state, which makes it difficult to reconstruct their complete narrative threads. The discoverers did not record their exact finding spots or the way they fell (face up or down) which might have shed light on their provenance. For these reasons, the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs will be discussed as three series dictated by their subject matter, with additional observations where possible about their position in an architectural setting and comparison with other rooms.

#### **6.1.1. Royal lion hunt**

This series shows scenes with the king slaying lions either a) on foot using bow, dagger, spear, or mace, or b) from his chariot in motion with the bow. As such, they make two different sets of narratives. While the first one, with the king in chariot, is fragmentary, consisting of only one slab and few additional fragments (Barnett's slabs A-B), the latter, with the king hunting on foot, seems to be complete (slabs C-E, which form a continuum). A compensating element is that many of the scenes contain epigraphs explaining the action. The slabs preserved entirely measure 160 cm in height (slabs D and E).

Rooms with similar subjects, which may provide points of reference, are Room S (the king hunts on foot, from boat or from horseback, using bow, spear, dagger or mace) and Room C (the king hunts only from chariot, using bow, spear and dagger). One scene is almost identical in both Rooms S and space S<sup>1</sup>. Few other scenes treat the same topic.

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<sup>330</sup> Winter, 2010 (b); Porter, 2003 (d).

<sup>331</sup> Russell, 1991: 169-171. The subjects combined either different military campaigns or military affairs and construction program (in the central court). Multiple subject rooms are known also in Sargon II's palace, where scenes of small hunt and banquet, as well as warfare and banquet come together in two bathrooms (Rooms 7 and 2) of a monumental suite. See Albenda, 1986.

Usually, one set of actions is ascribed to one wall (or part of it if the space of a door interfered). As such, we may assume that, if in the same space, the two groups were arranged on two walls or one wall divided by a doorway. The thick vertical band at the left edge of slab C suggests that this was positioned at the beginning of a wall (a similar band appears at the right edge of slab 6 in Room S, positioned right after the doorway between Rooms S and T).

a) The series with the king on foot shows three different episodes of the royal hunt. In the upper register the depiction is identical to one scene in Room S, on slabs 11-14 (Barnett, Pl. XLVI-XLVII). The action is to be “read” from right to left; it starts with the depiction of a lion three times in the sequential movement from its release from the cage to its jump and the encounter with the king’s bow; right away the king is shown stabbing the rampant lion with his dagger. The lion is rendered with previously shot arrows in its body, suggesting that it is the same animal.<sup>332</sup> Unlike in Room S, an inscription is set above the stabbing scene this time (slab C, upper register), marking it as the climax of the sequences. The four-line inscription reads as follows:

“I, Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for my great sport (*“ina me-lul-ti GAL ya”*), an angry lion of the plain from a cage they brought out. On foot, with an arrow, x times I pie(rced<sup>9</sup> him), (but) he did not die. At the command of Nergal, king of the plain, who granted me strength and manliness, afterward, with the iron dagger from my belt, I stabbed him and (he) died”.<sup>333</sup>

The inscription helps understand that a continuous movement was rendered. Although apparently not completely unknown before, it is now, with the scene here and the one in Room S proper that this visual effect is clearly explained by its authors.<sup>334</sup> The narrator and the main character of the scene is the king himself (first person speech). Both text and image establish the setting: the lion is released from a cage, which sets the action in a controlled environment; the animal is, nevertheless, the text says, a wild beast of the plains. The type of hunt is on foot. The slaying of the animal is both a kingly sport and a divine command, the inscription informs. As divine order, it is associated (in this instance) with Nergal, a god with war-like attributes. The king’s manhood and strength, bestowed on him by Nergal, are the royal qualities emphasized by the close combat with the enraged lion, or, to be more precise,

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<sup>332</sup> This visual technique, which can best be identified in some reliefs of Ashurbanipal’s North Palace, was coined “continuous style” in Watanabe, 2004.

<sup>333</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 26-27.

<sup>334</sup> For previous possible renderings of such sequences, see Watanabe, 2004.

with a wounded enraged lion, making the animal even more fierce and dangerous and, in effect, more audacious the king.

Apparently, the king's eye, wrist, and part of bow, as well as the noses of the two following attendants were mutilated, while all the other characters seem to be unaltered; this has led scholars to believe they were intentionally damaged in antiquity.

In the middle register two scenes are depicted. The first one is again of the type of a continuous movement. A lion on his belly is facing and preparing to attack an attendant on horseback. Immediately after, the king is shown holding the rampant lion by its tail and about to smash his head with the mace, while the animal, taken by surprise, turns towards him. The four-line inscription inserted above the scene (slab D) introduces the protagonist and describes the action. A new definition of the hunt is given: the action is taken “for my princely sport” (“*ina me-lu-ti NUN-ti-ya*”)<sup>335</sup> and the killing is done at the command of Ninurta<sup>336</sup> and Nergal.<sup>337</sup> The scene is framed by attendants in chariot at one end and the king's followers at the other (recognizable also in the scene in Room S). To the left from this scene another one is rendered, again containing a capture. The king on foot is piercing a lion with his spear, holding it by his ear. A three-line inscription above and in front of the king describes precisely the action. It also adds new information: the hunt is undertaken “for my pleasure” (“*ina mul-ta-'u-ti-ya*”) and the slaying is carried out with the encouragements of the gods Assur and Ištar.<sup>338</sup> The latter is called in this context “lady of the battle”.<sup>339</sup>

The lower register of slabs C-E shows a scene with dead lions being brought in front of the king, who is shown performing a libation over the dead animals, holding an upright bow. The scene is taking place in front of a tall table and a cone-like standard, in musical

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<sup>335</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 27.

<sup>336</sup> Ninurta was the tutelary deity of plain animals and of the newly established Assyrian capital Kalhu at the time of Ashurnasirpal II. Older literary compositions in both Sumerian and Akkadian present him as a warrior god, son of Enlil. Ninurta slew several monsters which endangered the world.

<sup>337</sup> Nergal too was a warrior deity, associated with pestilence and destruction. At the time of Ashurbanipal the “Poem of Erra” (another name for Nergal) seems to have been quite popular, at least in the royal milieu, as tablets with this text were part of the so-called library of Ashurbanipal. Bodi, 1991.

<sup>338</sup> While Assur is the tutelary deity of Assyria and of the ancient capital with the same name, Ištar is the tutelary deity of Nineveh, the main royal city of Assyria at the time of Ashurbanipal. Both are warrior deities.

<sup>339</sup> See text in Gerardi, 1988: 27.

accompaniment. Between the king and the musicians and above the table and standard a three-line inscription is inserted:

“I, Ashurbanipal, king of the universe, king of Assyria, whom Assur and Ninlil<sup>340</sup> have granted exalted strength.

The lions which I killed, at whom I pointed the fierce bow of Ištar, lady of battle,  
I set up an offering over them, (and) I made a libation over them”.<sup>341</sup>

The inscription, through the voice of the king, describes the visual depiction. What it introduces in addition are the divine names. Thus, an association is created between the hunt, the king and the divine world. The gods endowed the king with strength; in turn, the king confirmed his god-endowed exceptional strength through the result of the hunt and at the same time fulfilled the divine commands. Image and text make reference to the bow as the weapon of hunt and the bow is associated with the goddess Ištar, goddess of battle par excellence. Thus, the lion hunt is conceived in the same sphere of royal action as war, implying the king's warrior skills and fulfilling of divine command. The same ceremonial implying the bow and libation was conducted concerning defeated enemies; it may have been rendered in a relief in Room I concerning the severed head of Teumman, king of Elam<sup>342</sup> and it is explicitly described so in two entries in the epigraph collections – libation poured over the severed head of Teumman and a bow held over the defeated Gambulian king Dunnanu. In the latter case, the ceremonial takes place in connection with the *akitu* festivities of the goddess Ištar of Arbela.<sup>343</sup>

As it shows, slabs C, D and E are a complete series which makes up a full, coherent narrative. The narrative starts with the upper register, goes through the middle one and ends at the bottom. It presents a full royal hunt in an organized and controlled setting, showing the king hunting on foot with various weapons to the final stage of the hunt – a libation and dedication to goddess Ištar. When compared to the similar theme in Room S, it appears that there was not only one way in which the royal hunt in a controlled environment to be rendered. Room S contained many more other episodes: it rendered the king using the same weapons, but also introduced other contexts, like hunting from horseback or extending the hunt to gazelles and wild donkeys; the episode of the lion release from cage was preceded by

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<sup>340</sup> Ninlil is the equivalent of Mullissu, spouse of the god Ashur.

<sup>341</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 27-28.

<sup>342</sup> See Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXV, slab 9. See also the discussion of Room I in the thesis.

<sup>343</sup> See a discussion on the association between lion hunt and military victory in Weissert, 1992 (especially) 349-350. See the respective epigraphs in Russell, 1999: 161 (14) and 162 (21).

one of testing the bows in Room S; among the king's attendants were also Elamite figures; the concluding part of the hunt was rendered as the king holding upright spear facing the carcasses, not standing next to them with the bow and pouring libation. This may be due to the architecture of the spaces the reliefs were ascribed to. The series in Room S was ascribed to a long wall, allowing thus for further development in terms of number of episodes and diversity of scenes. The series of slabs C, D and E of the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs may have been ascribed to a smaller wall. What can be noticed, though, when comparing these series of Room S and S<sup>1</sup> is that beyond diversity there is a set of ideas which are mandatory when dealing with royal hunt on foot, and these are precisely what the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs depicted: the use of bow and dagger, the use of spear, the use of mace and ceremonial with the carcasses. It must be mentioned that this core of scenes appears gathered together in the upper two registers in Room S, at the center of the series (slabs 11, 12 and 13).

What differentiates visibly the series in the two rooms, beyond the diversity of episodes and scenes in Room S, is the royal figure and the epigraphs. While in Room S, the king wears a head band, a kilt when hunting and a long robe when standing in front of the carcasses, in the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs, at all times the king wears the royal crown and a long dress, while all his attendants are dressed in a knee-long kilts. What the two royal renditions have in common is the stylus tucked under the belt at the waist (slab D in the upper register, Pl. LIX).

b) The second series of royal lion hunt in the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs is preserved on only one slab (slab A, Barnett, Pl. LVI, only as Boutcher's drawings) and a small fragment (slab B). On slab A the king appears in all three registers, always hunting from the chariot in motion and always with the bow; he is accompanied, as in Room C, by a bearded chariot driver and two other beardless figures with spears. In the upper register the king is advancing towards the right, while in the other two registers he is moving in the opposite direction. Many figures of lions and lionesses, all having already been hit by several arrows, fill in the sight. At all times, there is a pursuing lion at the rear of the chariot, while another one is shown trampled by the horses. Throughout the series, each animal, like in Room C, is shown differently. The middle register, much damaged, bears an eight-line inscription, positioned above the scene and flanking the upper part of the figures.

“I, Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria, for whom Assur, king of the gods, and Ištar, lady of battle, decreed a heroic destiny.

Nergal, who goes in front, caused me to hunt nobly upon the plain, for pleasure (“*ki mul-ta-’-u-ti*”)...

I went out to the plain, a wide expanse, the raging lions, a fierce mountain breed, attacked...

They surrounded my chariot, my lordly vehicle. At the command of Assur and Ištar, the great gods, my lords, ...  
 ...my yoke...those lions I scattered...  
 [Ummana]pp[a, son of U]rtaki, king of Elam,<sup>344</sup> who fled and submitted [to me]  
 ...a lion sprang upon him...  
 ...he feared and he implored my lordship”.<sup>345</sup>

The inscription introduces new information, not present in the image. First, it connects the king to the great gods of Assyria, Assur and Ištar. For the latter, her warrior character is explicitly stated. The third divine name introduced by the text is Nergal, who is actually the one governing the king's act of hunting (as suggested by the Š-stem conjugation of the verb with a causative meaning – “*u-še-piš-an-ni*” “he caused me to hunt”). Next, the setting is clarified by the text, as no element of landscape is introduced in the pictorial: the hunt is undertaken in the wilderness, on a vast plain; the animals are wild beasts, and more so, a fierce breed. The setting thus is different than the hunt of the previous series, which was conducted in a manipulated environment, even if the animals were still wild. The hunt is conducted “*ki mul-ta-'u-ti*” – “as if for pleasure”.<sup>346</sup> The lions are presented further as dangerous apparitions, who surrounded the royal chariot and attacked. In the light of the text, the king as hunter is the hero who eliminates the great danger. He does so at the command of his gods, in the virtue of the heroic destiny they decreed for him. The successful hunt is the confirmation of his divinely established destiny and his rightful shepherd-ship as he fights off danger. His protective role and his warrior destiny were further extended by the introduction of yet another character (who may have existed in the relief, but is now missing). Associated with this lion hunt in the plain is the exiled Elamite prince, Ummanappa, the son of the Elamite king Urtaki, who had previously sought refuge, together with his brothers (Ummanigaš and Tammaritu I) at the Assyrian court, after Teumman took the throne (see the chronological chart with the events after Elam 1). Attacked by a lion, the Elamite prince cries for the king's protection, and the latter does not hesitate to save him. The lion hunt in this instance stresses symbolically the ideal political relationship between Assyria and Elam, that is, how it was projected by the Assyrian royal rhetoric. According to it, the Assyrian king was rightfully the overlord of the prince, proven by his superior strength. Voluntary submission

<sup>344</sup> First part of the line was translated as such by Weissert and after him Russell. Weissert, 1997: 341, fn. 7 and Russell, 1999: 201.

<sup>345</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 25-26.

<sup>346</sup> Weissert, 1997: 342. The expression differs in this context from the variation used in the inscriptions of the previous series, when the king hunts on foot (“*ina me-lul-ti GAL-ya*”; “*ina me-lu-ti NUN-ti-ya*” and “*ina mul-ta-'u-ti-ya*”), characterizing thus the hunt in the wilderness.

brought in return the king's protection. As such, the written message, even though attached to an image of animal slaughter, sketches a rather benevolent image of the king. Incontestably, Elamite royalties did find refuge at the king's court; the situation was then stylized to emphasize the Assyrian king's power and was braided as a lion hunting action. This scene makes allusions to events taking place after the campaign against the Elamite king Urtaki, a campaign which is not recorded anymore in the late editions of the annals (F and A) which celebrated the construction of the North Palace.<sup>347</sup> Unfortunately, the architectural location of these scenes remains unknown, together with whatever it would have had to say about its effects on the viewer.

### 6.1.2. Warfare

Secondly, the S<sup>1</sup> reliefs contained warfare series. Three slabs and a few fragments survive. Two of them make a continuum: a large slab A and a narrower one B in Barnett's Pl. LX-LXI, measuring 156 cm in height (only slab B is completely preserved) and they are treated as one unit here (a). A third slab stands alone: slab A in Barnett's Pl. LXVI, measuring 172 cm in height. A few smaller fragments with related scenes were also recuperated from Room S: Barnett's slab B, Pl. LXVI. The third slab and the related fragments are treated as a second unit (b).

a) In the two slabs forming a continuum the upper register showed a submission scene. On the left side, a prostrating figure with a round turban-like cap is introduced by a pair of Assyrian courtiers in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot (now lost) and his retinue. Of the royal figure, only the front legs of a large size horse survive. The existence of the royal presence is supported by the following slab, which shows the accompanying royal retinue. Most probably, the missing part showed the king in his chariot, as was the case in the other instance of surrendering enemies in Room M.<sup>348</sup> An inscription was inserted above the royal figure, now lost together with the fragment that would have depicted the king.<sup>349</sup> It most

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<sup>347</sup> Urtaki is called Elamite king and his sons are said to have simply fled to Nineveh from Teumman in Editions F and A, while previous editions (B, C and D) recount Urtaki's break of treaty and attack on Babylonian territory, the Assyrians fighting the Elamites back and the untimely death of Urtaki in the same year. The name of Ummanappa does not appear mentioned in Editions F and A, but is listed among Urtaki's sons who sought refuge at Nineveh in earlier editions of the annals (B and C). Borger, 1996: 222 (B§30/ C§40).

<sup>348</sup> Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXV, Slabs 12-13.

<sup>349</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 24.



probably would have shed light on the identity of the surrendering figures and on the event it referred to. The bowing character, judging by the round cap he wears, should be identified with an Elamite royalty. Behind him, another pair of Assyrian courtiers introduces eight more Elamites arranged in two rows, bowing to the ground; several more standing Elamites are depicted with a raised arm gesture of submission. The scene is set in a landscape dominated by tall conifers and dwarf palm-like trees. Similar scenery is rendered elsewhere in the reliefs of the palace. One instance is the upper register of Room H, showing a park with a portico and a royal stele with the Assyrian king, most probably indicating an Assyrian city (although no epigraph survives to prove it). The other time is the middle band of the banquet series (slabs C-E) of this same lot of reliefs fallen in Room S, where again, as it will be seen, the action is conceived most probably in Nineveh, in a royal park. If landscape is an indicator for location in this case, this scene should take place in Assyria, maybe at Nineveh.

The middle register shows at the left side the sack of a city located in a different setting, dominated by mountainous landscape, suggested by hilly forms with scale patterns, and a river running vertically nearby. The name of the city, once inscribed above it, can no longer be read. The signs which can be read though identify it as a royal Elamite city, of no help since most captured cities are presented as royal. The narrator is the king, because the act of carrying off the city's booty is rendered in first person singular.<sup>350</sup> The city is depicted, as usual, on the full height of the register. A particular feature was introduced in its architectural rendering – a balcony-like platform attached to its right side. However, this particularity does not help in finding an identity for the city, because no annalistic texts record it. The Assyrians are shown escalating the city walls on assault ladder, attacking from the left side, while others are already inside slaughtering the city's defenders. Two rows of Elamite captives are led away by the Assyrian soldiers, moving rightwards. The latter are emphasized, in the Assyrian artistic fashion, by a slightly larger size than their defeated enemies.

In the lower register another series of captives, this time Babylonians (judging by their hairdo and beards) are brought in from the right in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot depicted at the left side. The latter, like the Elamite city right above him, is rendered on the full height of the register. The royal figure is further emphasized by his larger size than the attendants accompanying him in the royal vehicle. The chariot is preceded and followed by the royal suite of soldiers and attendants. The whole scene is placed on a watercourse filled

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<sup>350</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 25.

with fish, running at the bottom of the register and rising towards the middle register at the right side.

This set of slabs contained thus three events located in three different landscape settings: perhaps Assyrian setting in the uppermost register,<sup>351</sup> mountainous and river landscape in the middle register and a river in the last. The surviving set contained a double depiction of the king triumphant in his chariot, once in the lowest register and again in the upper most one. The figure of the king and the siege of the city at the left side may have stayed for the left edge of the narrative lines. The right edge, however, shows the image of the king only in the upper register, while the other two registers require the Elamite captives arriving somewhere, most likely in front of the king in his chariot, and the Babylonians being brought from somewhere, a city or a marshy site. Other slabs, therefore, must have been attached to this series at the right edge. The submission episode most celebrated by the sources, in both epigraph collections and annalistic editions, is that of Tammartu II. The entries in the collections present two options: Tammartu II, who had previously joined the Babylonian uprising, fell victim to an internal rebellion, was dethroned and fled with his family and nobles to Nineveh bowing to the ground and pleading for help, (epigraphs (51) and (57) of Text A, with colophon mentioning the *bīt redûti* ; epigraph (65) from Text F, with no colophon); Tammartu II, previous ally of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, was dethroned by his servant Indabibi and took the sea road, got stuck in the mud with the boat, was carried on the back by a servant, ate raw food to stay alive, but was sent gifts by Ashurbanipal, accepted them and kissed the king's feet (epigraphs (68)-(70) of Text G, also with colophon mentioning the *bīt redûti* ).<sup>352</sup> The rendition in our relief seems closer to the account in Texts A and F. The epigraphs in the proximities of these entries, however, would not clarify which Elamite city would be rendered in the middle register, or what Babylonian episode could be displayed in the lower register. However, the annals treat the episode of Tammartu II, as well as the frequent changes on the Elamite throne, as one of the political actions which developed during the Babylonian rebellion (see the chronological chart). Edition A however, treats the Elam 3 affair together with the defeat of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion as a single *girru*, mentioning that Babylonian cities were defeated. This would explain the lower and the top registers, but would leave unanswered the middle register with mountainous landscape. More

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<sup>351</sup> Cf. Nadali, who considers it a mountainous landscape. Nadali, 2007: 67.

<sup>352</sup> Borger, 1996: 308-316 (51, 57, 65, 68-70) and Weidner, 1932-33: 192-199 (51, 83 (Borger's 57), 65, 68-70).

precision cannot be forwarded for the moment,<sup>353</sup> neither from the epigraphs, nor from the annals, suggesting that the known collections of epigraphs concerned with this cycle do not parallel the reliefs in this space, and the annalistic texts were not the direct sources for the reliefs.

Whatever the case, the way in which the existing slabs organized the scenes suggests that the artists sought to obtain a certain vertical association of images. The right side of the large slab A shows an alignment of scenes from top to bottom: the surrender scene in the upper register, the besieged royal Elamite city in the middle register, and the crowned Assyrian king triumphant in his chariot in the bottom register. Thus, the image of the king, the protagonist of the relief narrative, is associated with the defeat and the surrender of the enemy.

b) The remaining slab and fragments show scenes of a second military exploit – **slabs A-B**, in Barnett's Pl. LXVI. The upper register shows Assyrian soldiers with upright spears and shields, facing rightwards. One of them, the last in the row, has a completely different hairdo, though, suggesting he may have been something else than an Assyrian. In the band beneath them, unarmed Elamites are moving in the same direction– three men on foot, raising their arms in a submission gesture, and one driving a chariot. The middle register shows on its full height an enemy city already on fire. Only the Assyrian soldiers are depicted; they are destroying the city walls and carrying its booty away. No scene of attack and no enemy

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<sup>353</sup> See Nadali, who, based on the annalistic editions, proposes the identification of the Elamite royalty in the upper register with Ummanaldas and the Elamite city in the middle register with Dur-undasi, where Ummanaldas took refuge during Elam 5 campaign; the city is described in Ashurbanipal's annals to have been positioned across the river Idide. This hints to the second campaign against the Elamite king Ummanaldas (Elam 5). However, the author does not take into account that the reliefs in the room should have worked as a whole, and he does not consider in his discussion the third register of the series, which depicts Babylonian prisoners. What would speak in favor of Tammaritu II's submission instead of Ummanaldas is the context concerning the event in the annals: Tammaritu is said to have fled with 85 nobles of his, which would be rendered in the great number of Elamite figures in the scene, while Ummanaldas is said to have been simply captured, without any details of his entourage. More so, the visual rendering draws close to the textual description of the scene in the annals and in the epigraph collections – Tammaritu and his nobles crawl on their bellies and the latter brushed the ground before the king with his beard, while nothing is said about Ummanaldas' encounter with the king. If Nineveh is indeed suggested by the flora landscape, this too would accommodate Tammaritu's submission at Nineveh, rather than Ummanaldas's capture (caught in the mountains and brought to Nineveh). See Nadali, 2007: 66-67 and Borger, 1996: 228-232 (Edition B) and 234-235 (Editions F and A) for the Ummanigaš/Tammaritu/ Šamaš-šumu-ukin context; and p. 249-250 for the capture of the Ummanaldas context (only edition A). See also the chronological chart in this thesis for anchoring the events.

defenders are rendered. It stresses thus not the actual besieging moment, but the city's definite defeat and the moment of its destruction. An inscription above the city identifies it:

“Hamanu, royal city of Elam, I surrounded, I conquered,  
I carried off its plunder, I destroyed (it) utterly, I burnt (it) with fire”.<sup>354</sup>

The epigraph identifies the city as a royal seat of the Elamites. While the text mentions the siege, the depiction shows only the last part of the action: the arson, the booty and the destruction. No moment of combat is rendered. The conquest of Hamanu makes the subject matter of another room of the North Palace, Room F, where it is more consistently treated. In Room F, the pictorial effort stressed out the siege of the city with its defenders falling from the walls under the Assyrian attack. There too an inscription identified the city by its name. There are differences both in the visual rendering and the textual insertion in the treatment of the Hamanu episode between the two rooms. (A more detailed discussion will be provided in the analysis of Room F as case study further below). The lower register shows groups of men (by hairdo and beards they seem to be Babylonians) and women sitting at tables, eating and drinking under the surveillance of two Assyrian soldiers with tall shields. The scene is animated by the variety of gestures of the characters. No gestures of submission on the part of the banqueters or aggression on the part of the Assyrian soldiers are shown. A small fragment of a similar banqueting scene shows Elamite figures.

Other fragments, which make **slab B** in Barnett's catalogue Pl. LXVI, show activities within an enclosing wall in the uppermost register and more figures seated and eating under the surveillance of Assyrian soldiers in the lower register. Several tents are depicted within the wall enclosure, and inside the tents various domestic activities take place – Assyrian soldiers receive drinks, a bed is being arranged, a goat is being trenched, pots are placed on fire. Curiously, two camels are also rendered within the enclosure. Such rendition of enclosure and tents is known from Sennacherib's reliefs, from the famous siege of Lachish. There, such a scene is placed at the end of the war, after the submission of the enemy, long behind the king enthroned receiving the booty of Lachish.<sup>355</sup>

In order to identify the scenes, the main hint is the label of Hamanu. The city was captured in two military campaigns – Elam 4 and Elam 5 (see chronological chart). The North Palace editions F and A give more importance to the city during the second campaign,

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<sup>354</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 25.

<sup>355</sup> See Russell, 1991: 200-207 (Figs. 108-113).

when its capture stroke panic into the Elamite king Ummanaldas; however, they would not explain the Babylonian presence in the lower register. Since no epigraph collections refer to any of these events, it remains to look into the other annalistic texts. The only one which seems to cover Babylonian captives and the capture of Hamanu is the account of Elam 4 in Edition Kh, the first edition to introduce it (see description of event in the Appendix). Although badly damaged, the text puts the intervention in Elam in connection to Šamaš-šumu-ukin rebellion and its aftermath, when an unknown rebel fled to Elam triggering an Assyrian expedition there; the military intervention resulted in the capture and plunder of the fortress Bit-imbi and other 25 cities, including Hamanu. The edition mentions that during this campaign the inhabitants of several cities in southern Babylonia (Nippur and Uruk) were taken to Assyria together with the spoils from Elam, perhaps because of their anti-Assyrian orientation during the rebellion. The letters of the time provide information that the Sealand governor, subject of Ashurbanipal, conducted a parallel intervention in the South, in Babylonia, for the capture of the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate (who managed to escape to Elam and elude capture). What the annalistic edition would not explain is the actual peaceful rendering of the Babylonian captives in the camp – in the text they are taken to Assyria and killed according to their crimes.

### **6.1.3. Royal banquet**

Thirdly, the reliefs fallen in Room S included five slabs with scenes of banquet in a garden setting (slabs A-E, Barnett, Pl. LXIII). The only completely preserved slab (slab E) measures 170 cm in height. They make a narrative of their own, with some parts missing. The arrangement of scenes seems to suggest rather a single large register with bands and landscape functioning to direct the view to a central point, from bottom to top.<sup>356</sup>

The lower band, very fragmentary, depicted a setting of tall reeds and (wild) animals: a stag's horns survive in slab A and the body of a boar in slab E. The second band shows a garden with tall conifers and smaller palm trees. The landscape here is similar to the depiction in Room H in the upper register (portico in a park and a royal stele) and in the Elamite submission scene on other two reliefs fallen in Room S, discussed above (slabs A-B of the first series with warfare, upper register, Barnett, Pl. LX). Attendants are carrying plates with food, are picking flowers, or carrying furniture. To the right edge (slab E), two figures

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<sup>356</sup> Albenda, 1976-77.

facing the whole scene and backing a wall structure stand guard holding sticks or wands. The surviving upper band shows the royal couple banqueting in the same garden setting (slab C), amid symmetrically arranged trees. Female attendants are bringing food and female musicians play various instruments. Various figures are approaching from the left (slab A) in a scene without any elements of landscape. The last figure (fragmentarily preserved) wears a tall hat with fish-tail top and looks behind him,<sup>357</sup> suggesting that other slabs followed. Before him, three beardless Assyrians with stick, fly-whisk and napkins urge an Elamite royal figure with round turban, which is carrying a vessel, in the direction of the royal couple. Further to the right, another Elamite figure with turban is rendered holding a fly-whisk and raising one arm in submission. At their side, three more figures, bare-headed, of which one is bearded, bow to the ground. A three-line inscription lacking the beginnings and part of the endings was inserted above the scene:

“(…) his good (deeds?) they love, all the princes of the wor[ld], (…)  
 (….) kings of Elam, whom with the encouragement of Assur and Ninlil, my hands conquered,  
 (….) they stood<sup>?</sup>, their royal meal they prepared with their own hands, and they brought (it)  
 [before me].”<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> P. Albenda argues for his identification with a *kalû* ( translated in modern literature as lamentation-priest) based on a stone fragment with the depiction of such a figure and an inscription mentioning the cultic designation. See Albenda, 1976: 62. Same characters with tall hats and fish-like tail at the top are also found in Sennacherib’s reliefs forming an orchestra which leads a procession to the temple of Ištar (see detail image in Reade, 2005: 38, Fig. 6) and in military camp scene, where he is depicted together with another character standing in front of laded table and chariot with divine standards (Reade, 2005: 48, Fig. 16). The *kalû* cultic functionary, according to the Neo-Assyrian written sources, recited hymns and prayers (in Sumerian and accompanied by music) in order to sooth the hearts of the gods, performed various ritual activities for the purification of temple and city, and was recognized as scholar in the royal milieu (along with several categories of experts in divination, although the *kalû* himself was not a diviner proper, but had knowledge and possessed materials of such techniques). See Koch, 2015:23. In addition to *kalû*, two other types of figures with peculiar (tall) hats are represented in Assyrian images, identified by inscriptions as *šangû* and *alahhinu*, but they don’t appear in Ashurbanipal’s known palace reliefs. See Reade, 2005 (especially p. 8), for a survey of Assyrian royal imagery involving scenes which may stand as visual representations of rituals. Tall hat characters are represented, for example, in reliefs of Shalmanesser III (the bronze bands of the Balawat gates) with the king in libation scene before a royal stela cut in rock (Reade, 2005: 40, Fig. 8); in military camp scene of Ashurnasirpal II in his palace at Kalhu, where the tall hat character is depicted with a hand in the entrails of a slaughtered animal (Reade, 2005: 42, Fig. 10); in military camp scene of Tiglath-pileser III also at Kalhu, depicting a scene with a ram brought before divine standards, table and oil burner (Reade, 2005: 43, Fig. 11);

<sup>358</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 25.

Through the voice of the king, the inscription settles the background and explains the situation: the defeated and captured enemies were made to prepare themselves the royal food (their own royal food), but they now act as mere servants for the one true king – Ashurbanipal. It introduces what is not rendered in the image – the name of the great gods of Assyria (Assur and Ninlil). The scene is put in connection to successful war affairs, and the banquet is defined as the triumphal conclusion of the king's military efforts. Attaching the gods to the image functioned to emphasize the king's actions, which stood as proof of his continuous support from the divine. Although not by name, the identity of the figures is revealed: they are all the princes of the world among which the Elamite kings are particularized. As the text says and as shown by the image, more Elamite kings were made to serve at the king's triumphal banquet. Edition A of the annals mentions three Elamite kings at Nineveh: Tammарitu II and Pa'e, who fled to Assyria and submitted by themselves, and Ummanaldas, eventually captured by the Assyrians; with them is also mentioned an Arab king. Together, they are made to carry the king on his chair during the *akitu* ceremonial.<sup>359</sup> However, no mention is made to a royal feast, but the scene must be considered to belong to the later episodes occurring after the defeat of the Arabs and capture of Ummanaldas (Elam 6 and Arab 3).

The Assyrian king and queen are shown under a grapevine alcove, flanked on both sides by female attendants with fans and by two small identical standards. The king is depicted half reclining on a couch, covered with a blanket up to his waist. It is the first time the royal figure is rendered in such fashion in the palatial reliefs (or in any royal depiction).<sup>360</sup> The queen is sitting on a throne with back and armrests, resting her feet on a stool. She is positioned on the left side of the scene, facing the king, the rendering allowing for a table with vessels to be depicted between the royal figures. The king is wearing only a headband with ribbons falling down the back, without the pointed royal crown. He is shown lifting a cup to his mouth and holding a lily-like flower. Same type of flower is held by a figure in the band below, whose head is not preserved, strolling in the garden. In another fragment a figure carries a plate full of such flowers.<sup>361</sup> They are also depicted growing tall in a garden scene of Room E, where a

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<sup>359</sup> Borger, 1996: 249-250.

<sup>360</sup> Apparently there is only one other known depiction of a reclining person, which may have been the king – on the Imgur-Enlil gates of Salmanasser III (door C, band XIII). See Kertai, 2015: 226 (fn. 118).

<sup>361</sup> BM 135118, Barnett, 1976: Pl. LXIV (h).

couple of lions are resting free, beneath trees and vine grapes, suggesting that the scenes in passage E and the banquet scene were projected in the same environment.

The king's face and hand with cup were intentionally destroyed in antiquity. Marks of hits which missed their target are still visible around the king's figure. The queen also holds a vessel to her mouth and a cloth in the other hand. Her face (nose, mouth and eyes) was also intentionally altered, as well the eyes of her immediate attendants, although not as severe as the visage and hand of the king. All the other figures were left intact.<sup>362</sup>

Size, adornments, and position emphasize the elevated status of the royal couple and the hierarchy within the palace. The queen is slightly larger than the attendants, she is seated,<sup>363</sup> her feet resting on a footstool,<sup>364</sup> and her stature reaches higher than the personnel. Her dress is rendered with more elaborate details of decoration, and her head is adorned with a crenellated crown,<sup>365</sup> unlike her attendants who are wearing a head band. The king however, is rendered even higher than the queen, his head touching the wine alcove line above. What is remarkable is the furniture associated with the royal couple. In no other relief is the king seated on a couch, while the throne with back and armrests seems to have been reserved for

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<sup>362</sup> See discussions on image destruction in Assyria in May, 2014 (with previous bibliography) and Porter, 2009.

<sup>363</sup> From ancient times (e.g. the "standard of Ur" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium), in Mesopotamian visual representations of seated characters occupy a higher position in importance – it is reserved either for royalty or for the divinity, while the attendants are all standing.

<sup>364</sup> The foot stool appears associated with highest rank figures or divinities. As Albenda notices, in the banquet scenes of Sargon II's reliefs depicting a banquet, the figures hold their feet above the ground. Albenda, 1976: 63.

<sup>365</sup> A similar mural crown was depicted on a fragment of glaze tile recovered from the temple of Ištar at Nineveh, dated to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. It may be, J. Reade argues, that the series showed the queen of Ashurnasirpal II, judging by the evidence of cloths of the figure, which may be part of a queen's regalia. More secure evidences of a feminine presence in the royal visual representations which the author further provides, stem from Sennacherib's reign on. A bronze fragment (Louvre, AO 20.185) shows a king (either Sennacherib or Esarhaddon) followed by queen Naqia (Zakutu), a wife of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon's mother (identified by caption), depicted in an identical ceremonial gesture. However, she does not wear the mural crown. Two Neo-Assyrian seal impressions (BM 84789 and BM 84802) believed to come from Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh show the king followed by a queen in worshipping a goddess mounted on an animal. The queen in both cases wears a mural crown, but different than the one worn by Ashurbanipal's queen, as the former also preserved traces of a cone projecting at the top. See Reade, 1987.



kings and gods only.<sup>366</sup> This may have very well been the visual solution found for rendering both queen and king in the highest status, while still emphasizing hierarchy.

A number of details are inserted in the banqueting scene, not all of them easy to understand. On the left side from the royal couple, hanging from a conifer tree, a severed upside down head is depicted. It is the first time a publicly exposed head is rendered in the palatial visual narrative. In a palm-tree nearby a locust is shown and several birds are scattered here and there, one of them flying directly towards the insect. A rich necklace hangs from the side of the king's couch, unlike any jewelry worn by the king himself in other depictions. A bow and quiver, together with a sword are set on a table nearby, right underneath a hand holding a long wand or a bird swatter. It is not clear if this was a cut-off hand hanged in the tree in the same manner as the severed head, or if it simply belonged to a now missing figure.<sup>367</sup> To a certain distance, horse equipment lies on another table. The animal itself might have been depicted in a now missing fragment. Without any epigraph to explain them, it is impossible to actually appreciate the role and meaning of all these objects. An attempt was done by P. Albenda in a lengthy article.<sup>368</sup> She argued that they were all trophies of war. The head was of Teumman's, who challenged Assyria, was decapitated as breaker of the treaty and his head publicly exposed. This is based on the head's resemblance to the rendering of Teumman's head in Room 33 of the Southwest Palace. The necklace, the author argues, is of an Egyptian type and may have been booty or present. The weapons are not those the Assyrian king uses in his royal hunt, but rather of Elamite or Babylonian type, and neither are the horse trappings, which again belong most likely to a Babylonian type. They might come from the booty that Ashurbanipal took from the palace of his defeated rebellious brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, including his royal insignia (his weapons, his horses and their equipment) after the capture of Babylon, and from Susa in Elam, during the second campaign against Ummanaldas, when Susa was devastated.<sup>369</sup> Because the whole personnel

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<sup>366</sup> Kertai, 2015: 210-212.

<sup>367</sup> While Barnett considers the hand to be a trophy of war, belonging to the Elamite king Teumman, and the stick to be his royal scepter, Albenda considers the hand as belonging to a now missing figure and the stick as a bird chaser. No sign of an arm is kept in front of the tree and it is unlikely, judging from the renderings on the opposite side, that an attendant would have been represented behind the tree. Albenda argues, however, that this is due to the British Museum reconstruction, while in the original drawing the tip of a foot was still visible. See Barnett, 1976: 56 and Albenda, 1976: 65.

<sup>368</sup> Albenda, 1976-77.

<sup>369</sup> Borger, 1996: 235 (A§40); 240-241(F§32/ A§57).

around the royal couple are women, a detail which renders the scene unique in the Mesopotamian art,<sup>370</sup> it is believed that the banquet depicted in the relief has to be located in the royal harem, from where men are excluded.<sup>371</sup> Exception makes the kilted figure some distance from the royal couple, who must be a youngster, most probably attending the horse. The particular location of this scene was meant to emphasize the peaceful aspects of Ashurbanipal's reign, that is, the state of security which could have only been achieved at the end of his many successful military campaigns.<sup>372</sup> Ashurbanipal's unusual reclining position would reflect actual circumstances concerning the king's illnesses (queries about Ashurbanipal's health are known).

However, certain aspects make things more complicated. It must be noted that, whatever these trophies were, no inscription was attached to them in order to explain them, in a context in which most reliefs fallen in Room S bear a great number of inscriptions, including the fragment referring to the royal banquet. No fragment of the garden scene itself however contained any epigraphs. This may mean that either the series was not finished, or the scenes were considered clear enough and suggestive as not to require any further identification and explanations. It would be thus expected that the viewer very easily identified the objects as foreign. Another aspect is that the famous banquet scene proper (Barnett Pl. LXIV, Slab C) is actually quite small (only 56 cm in height), which raises the question of who would actually notice the many small details inserted in the scene. As such, only a close look and guidance or strong familiarity with the content and its meaning would have rendered sense. It may be that it addressed intimate inhabitants of the room, perhaps the king himself.

As for the king's position on a couch and its connection to some illness Ashurbanipal suffered from is not very likely. Indeed, medical issues are known to make the subject of some of the surviving correspondence Ashurbanipal (as well as his father Esarhaddon) exchanged with the scholars around him. The nature of the suffering is never revealed. It is questionable the fact that any allusions to illnesses and poor state of health in general would have made their way into the palatial decoration, whose intention was to render the king in his perfection. The simple fact of bringing to the mind of the viewer a poor physical condition strongly contrasts with the powerful king defeating the enemies of Assyria and

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<sup>370</sup> Normally, the attendants of a main figure are of the same sex as the person they serve.

<sup>371</sup> Albenda, 1976-77.

<sup>372</sup> Albenda, 1976-77.

fighting fierce lions in close combat. Such a rendering (suggesting rather weakness) would have, on the contrary, invited contemporaries to challenge Ashurbanipal's power and would have only ridicule the palatial reliefs. All the more since this pose was newly introduced in the pictorial discourse and would have therefore drawn the attention by its novelty. It is more conceivable that the reclining pose was simply meant to emphasize the leisure atmosphere. It may also be that this pose was part of the common royal behavior, but it is the first time it made its way into the pictorial. Significantly enough, this pose was intentionally defaced in a severe way supposedly in antiquity.

## 6.2. The V<sup>1</sup>/T<sup>1</sup>reliefs

The five reliefs fallen in Rooms V and T, together with the fragment recuperated from corridor R (Barnett, slabs A-F, Pl. LXVII-LXXII) contain scenes of warfare. The visual narrative is arranged in two registers, subdivided in two bands.

A series of five slabs belong together – **slabs A-D** (Pl. LXVII). Slabs A, B, and C were found in Room V, while nothing is registered about the provenance of slab D. Only one small fragment of the reliefs survives (part of slab D), the rest being known only from Boutcher's drawings; nothing is known about the slabs' height in this case. In the upper register they show Assyrian soldiers – infantry, cavalry and chariotry – charging at a now missing city, towards the left, and a procession of Elamite captives being marched away in the opposite direction. The prisoners are arranged on two bands: they start moving from behind the Assyrian soldiers in the first band and from underneath them in the lower band (probably coming out of the besieged city). Women, men and children are being led away, together with various goods, cattle, and horses. Large vessels are also transported on carts. Assyrian soldiers too carry parts of chariots or furniture. Some captives have their hands tied behind their back, others are chained by their neck, two-by-two, and others hold their raised arms to the level of their face in a submissive gesture. In no other surviving scenes with captives from the North Palace do we find such renderings and attention to chained prisoners, except maybe in Room M, in the Egyptian campaign. In Room F, for example, they are tied with their hands behind their back and urged forward by Assyrian soldiers with sticks.

The lower register depicts two rows of Elamite captives moving in the opposite direction, arriving in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot at the left of the scene. The king and his royal suite are positioned underneath the attacked city and the Assyrian soldiers of the upper

register. The king is rendered on the full height of the entire slab A, preceded, and most certainly followed (in the now missing part) by his royal retinue. In the first rows of Elamites introduced in front of the king some raise their arms to their mouth while others have their arms tided at their back. Two Assyrian soldiers show the severed heads of several enemies to the royal retinue. A five-line cuneiform inscription is introduced in the space before the king:

“I, Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria,  
 Who,[at the command of Assur and] Ninlil, attained the desires of his heart.  
 The city of Din-[šarri?], city of Elam,  
 I besie[ged], I conquer[ed]. [Char]iots, carts, horses,  
 [mules I brought out], I counted as booty”.<sup>373</sup>

The text identifies thus clearly the author (the Assyrian king), the action, and the identity of the city where the captives in the second register are marched away from – Din-šarri. This city is mentioned by the annals among the Elamite cities captured during the second campaign against Ummanaldas, after the capture of Hamanu and Susa, and among many other royal cities (Elam 5). The city itself must have been depicted in the now missing slabs following slab D. The besieged city in the first register and the royal pose in the lower one must have functioned as the left edge of the narratives in this series, with the king’s suite in the lower register and the besieged city in the upper having preceded slab A. To the right, the captives must have arrived in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot in the first register, while in the lower register the second besieged city must have been shown. As such, this series is similar to the decoration of Room F also arranged in two registers and depicting siege, captives and king.

Several lively details interrupt here and there the flow of the prisoner march: some of the captives, while advancing forward, turn their heads and bodies to look back, whether to the Assyrian soldiers leading them away, or to other fellows; two bulls have their own dispute on the way, butting against one another (a similar rendering appears in the decoration of court J, but with differences of details in the number of animals and gestures), mothers hold their small children on their shoulders, in their arms or by their hand; one mother is rendered in the act of handing over her small child to another person in a carriage. Such details have the effect of inspiring liveliness into this depiction of captives.

Another slab fallen in Room V, **slab F** (Pl. LXVIII), measuring 162 cm in height, shows similar scenes in two registers: the upper register depicts two rows of Elamite captives

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<sup>373</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 28.

advancing to the right, and the lower register shows the Assyrian king triumphant in his chariot together with his following suite. The captives are civilians, including a child, and they are carrying various goods. Two Assyrians are pulling a cart with large objects, on top of which two smaller figures are represented as if seated, with their hands raised to their mouth and clad with a veil over their head. A similar depiction is rendered on one slab in Room F (slab 9, upper register, second band) depicting the captives marched away from the Elamite city Hamanu. The two small figures in Room F make the same gesture with the hands raised to their mouth in a context in which none of the figures around them does it. Neither do the Elamite captives in slab F fallen in Room V. Children, when they are depicted, look rather different and easy to identify (one being depicted in the band underneath), showing that the small figures with veil stood for something else. In the course of the first campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 4), the first time Hamanu is said to have been captured (together with other cities), the annals (Editions F and A) mention that not only people and goods were taken to Assyria, but also the gods of the cities.<sup>374</sup> If statues of gods are depicted in the reliefs in Room F, then the same is rendered in slab F fallen in Room V. Another occasion when gods are mentioned being taken away to Assyria is during the second campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 5), from various conquered royal cities,<sup>375</sup> and is mentioned again when the narration recounts in detail how Susa was devastated and its sanctuaries looted of all their goods.<sup>376</sup> In the same context, an Akkadian goddess, Nanaya, taken as spoil by the Elamites in the past, is said to have been carried back in order to be installed in her sanctuary in Uruk.<sup>377</sup> If so, we may assume that the series slab F belonged to was concerned with one episode of the two campaigns against Ummanaldas, either Elam 4 or Elam 5, but without any chance of more accuracy.

As usual, the royal pose is rendered on the full height of the register, while the retinue is arranged in two rows and the royal figure is larger than the attendants. The slab ends abruptly after the rear part of the horse attached to the chariot, showing that it certainly was followed by other slabs. In front of the king, like in the previous series, a five-line cuneiform inscription was inserted, but only the beginning of the lines survives. It was constructed in the first person singular; therefore, the author was the king. Booty and enemies are mentioned, as

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<sup>374</sup> Borger, 1996: 238-239 (F§24/ A§49).

<sup>375</sup> Borger, 1996: 240 (F§31/ A§56).

<sup>376</sup> Borger, 1996:240-241 (F§32/ A§57)

<sup>377</sup> Borger, 1996:242 (F§34/ A§59 and prism T§15).

well as the command of the gods.<sup>378</sup> The inscription must have been similar to the five-line text contained in the same context of the previous series (slab A).

Most probably a procession of captives or surrendering figures would have faced the Assyrian king in the following slabs. The besieged city the inscription alludes to was probably depicted at the other end of the visual narrative line. But the action in the upper register shows that this slab must have also been preceded by others, which would have shown the provenance of the Elamite captives. If so, the upper register continued a previous action, while in the lower register, the royal pose most probably backed a separate episode, with an action moving in the opposite direction.

Another relief, **slab E** (Barnett, Pl. LXVIII), also measuring 162 cm, was found somewhere in the ascending passage R. Its visual arrangement was also in two registers, which in turn were divided in two horizontal bands. The first register shows a procession of Elamite and Assyrian<sup>379</sup> bowmen advancing to the right, all with their arms raised to the level of their mouth. The same gesture is represented with the Assyrian soldiers advancing in a procession in Room I (Barnett, Pl. XXV, slabs 5-9, upper register), at the end of which the Assyrian king celebrated the defeat of Teumman (Elam 2) in an Assyrian city. Both Elamite and Assyrian soldiers in slab E are wearing their bows in a non-combat position, on their shoulder. Underneath the soldiers there is a group of musicians playing their instruments, preceded by a figure leading two horses to the right. The two bands make a fragment of single scene, which may have been processional in character. The lower register shows Assyrian infantry and cavalry attacking towards the left (a now missing city), in a landscape dominated by dwarf palm-trees. It is obvious that slab E was followed and preceded by other slabs. Unfortunately, a precise event cannot be identified based on this evidence only. Elamites are said to have been taken off to Assyria and enrolled in the Assyrian army in several occasions. One is rendered in Edition C, when the bowmen which fled with

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<sup>378</sup> Barnett, 1976: 60.

<sup>379</sup> Barnett assumes they are Chaldeans, but an identical bowman in full process of attacking a city in the register beneath (upper band) shows that they are definitely Assyrians. The Assyrian soldiers are not rendered always the same throughout the reliefs of the North Palace. Their war equipment is different (some have helmets of different types – pointed or with a curved ending), some have head bands; their hairdo is also different, from hanging straight on the shoulders to a loop, as is the case here. See Barnett, 1976: Pl. LXVIII (“Surrender of Chaldeans”).

Tammaritu II to Nineveh after his dethronement were enrolled in the Assyrian army;<sup>380</sup> bowmen of destroyed cities of from rebels who finally submitted to the Assyrian king are recorded in the annals in connection to the second campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 5).<sup>381</sup>

Fragments of two slabs, **slabs A and B** in Barnett's catalogue (Barnett, Pl. LXIX) were found fallen in Room T. They were also part of an original arrangement in two registers. The upper register shows Assyrian soldiers; chariotry, cavalry and slingers are still visible disposed on two bands, charging to the right (at a now missing city). The lower register depicted four bands with scenes of civilian Elamites camping (men, women and children). The people left their animals and goods to rest and are shown eating and drinking. The most suitable examples of Elamite civilians reported being taken away to Assyria are in the course of the two campaigns against Ummanaldas recounted in the annals.<sup>382</sup>

In her close analysis of the banquet scene, P. Albenda considered all the reliefs fallen in Room S, T and V to have stemmed from the same original room, which copied the shape of Room S below.<sup>383</sup> In this scenario, the Elamite wars, the banqueting and the hunt were interconnected. The Elamite wars would have been positioned to the left of the banquet. This because the Elamite cities would have first needed to be conquered for the Elamite royalties to serve at the royal banquet; the movement in the Elamite wars is orientated towards the right, showing progress of action towards the banquet scene. The royal lion hunt from chariot would have followed the banquet and last would have come the hunt on foot with the concluding libation act. As such, the banquet scene with the trophies of war in its setting of peace would have stood in the middle of the visual narratives.

It would be tempting to assume that the presence of the queen in the relief may be an indicator of the space in which it was displayed as part of the queen's quarters. However, there is no evidence to support a correlation between subject matter (and only a part of it for that matter) and gender arrangement of space in the palace or the particular occupants of a suite.<sup>384</sup> At best, we can make a comparison with Sennacherib's palace, the only one where a

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<sup>380</sup> Borger, 1996: 230 (C§61).

<sup>381</sup> See also fragments of slab Bon Barnett's Pl. LXVI, fallen in Room S. Borger, 1996: 242-243 (A§62-63).

<sup>382</sup> Borger, 1996: 237-238 (F§19/ A§44), 241-242 (F§33/ A§58).

<sup>383</sup> Albenda, 1976: 58.

<sup>384</sup> Kertai, 2015: 247.

suite was dedicated explicitly to the queen. Incorporated in Sennacherib's official inscription on the sphinx colossi guarding the entrance to this suite, one fragment says:<sup>385</sup>

“...for Tašmetum-šarrat, the queen (MI E.GAL), my beloved wife (*hirtu naramtu*), (...) I had a palace of loveliness, delight and joy built (...)”<sup>386</sup>

The queen's suite in the Southwest Palace was located in the western area of the complex, a considerable distance away from the two main reception suites (especially from the throne room). It was accessed through a courtyard and was composed of a reception room (Room LXIV), a small chamber attached to it to its right (Room LXVI), and a retiring room (Room LXVII) backing it. They communicated further to the left side with other rooms, only partially excavated. The quarters were similar in monumentality to other areas of the palace.<sup>387</sup> Nearby was a descending corridor (51n), leading to another exist, similarly decorated as passage A-R in the North Palace. The recovered reliefs of the suite show scenes of warfare.<sup>388</sup>

If this should be indeed the case and the suite bearing the fallen reliefs was reserved for the queen, it would be the first time a correspondence was made between the depicted scene and the occupant of the space (but it was also an innovation that a queen was introduced in the palatial inscription during Sennacherib as well). As such, the visual message would have still glorified the king's power, as he was the protagonist of all the scenes. Just as well, the introduction of the queen may have been just a variation on the triumphal celebration theme, with no relation to a particular occupant of the suite it decorated.

To summarize, rooms or spaces with multiple subjects were not a novelty in the Assyrian palaces. They, however, tended to maintain the same register arrangement throughout the space (but note though Room C, where one slab was divided in two registers, while all the other showed one single register).<sup>389</sup> Or, in the case of the fallen reliefs, as we have seen, the

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<sup>385</sup> The colossi were set at the entrance from courtyard LXIV to Room LXV.

<sup>386</sup> Reade, 1987: 141.

<sup>387</sup> Kertai, 2015: 142-143.

<sup>388</sup> See map of the Southwest Palace for the location of the suite in Russell, 1991: 172 and description of their reliefs at pp. 74-75. See also map in Kertai, 2015: fig. 17.

<sup>389</sup> In Room C of the North Palace one slab was divided in two registers, while all the other showed one single register. Overall, however, the narrative line is coherent in Room C, and the transit from one register to two registers is very smooth, given that the lions hunted by the kings were displayed throughout the whole surface of



action was structured in two and three registers. The slabs are also of different heights, with differences of as much as 20 cm between them.<sup>390</sup> While the height cannot be criteria for grouping together the existing slabs, due to their different register arrangements, it may suggest they stem from different locations. The warfare scenes indicate that the military campaigns should be identified with the last major events against Elam (Elam 4, and 5, as well as the following actions). The banquet scene is put in connection to war by the inscription having Elamite kings serving the royal couple: the trophies may also allude to spoils of war; but nothing in these scenes can be put in connection to royal lion hunt.

While the program of the original space or spaces remains unknown, what can be said is that the visual narratives were concerned with several royal achievements. The lion hunt on foot referred to the king alone, to his strength and skills. The lion hunt from the chariot mentioned Ummanappa an Elamite prince, and underlined an ideal relationship between the Assyrian king and Elam. The warfare narratives involved episodes from the great Šamaš-šumu-ukin rebellion, together with its Elam 3 episode (submission of Tammartu II); episodes from the Elam 4 or Elam 5 military campaigns with the destruction and plunder of Hamanu and other cities and references to the population carried off to Assyria; the capture of Dinšarri during Elam 5 campaign together with processions of Assyrian and Elamite soldiers occurring in its aftermath. Finally, the banquet episode makes allusions to the Elamite 2 campaign against Teumman (displaying his head, if indeed Teumman), but also later episodes following the last major campaigns against Elam with willing submissions and capture of several Elamite kings brought to serve Ashurbanipal. If they stemmed indeed from one space alone, such a space would have shown a complex retrospective of various military affairs, much like how the throne room itself functioned.

The Šamaš-šumu-ukin campaign with its Tammartu II episode is dealt with in the annals and the epigraph collections, the two campaigns against Ummanaldas are treated only by the annals (from Edition Kh to Editions F and A), the presence of the Elamite kings at Nineveh is

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the single register reliefs. Aligning clear-cut two-register arrangements next to three-register ones would certainly not give any sense of continuity.

<sup>390</sup> In Room F, the most complete one, all the surviving relief slabs were of the same height. In the ascending passage R the height of the slabs was more variable, but with no more than 10 centimeters difference, which may have been triggered by the special difference of level from the center of the palace to the portico below. But in passage R the arrangement was of a single register showing a succession of figures, more adapted to such architectural setting, not actual narratives, which would have needed careful alignment.

dealt with only by Edition A of the annals, but in different terms, mentioning also an Arab king, without any specification of a banquet. The reference to Ummanappa is completely absent in the late editions of the annals, but found in an earlier edition only.

The scenes of the reliefs bear quite a number of particularities. While banquet scenes are usual in palace reliefs (starting with Ashurnasirpal II), either after warfare or hunt, the scene in the North Palace is unique by several details: the presence of the queen in a banquet, unknown in the entire Assyrian art, the presence of the queen in the palace reliefs altogether, and the depiction of the reclining king.

Set above or close to the West portico, the original spaces of the fallen slabs would have shared, but also diverged from the subject matter of this whole wing by keeping with the royal hunt topic ascribed usually to corridors and passages, but introducing the warfare subjects and culminating with a royal banquet.

## **VII. Case studies: Room F and Room M of the North Palace**

After assembling a general picture with the relief distribution in the previous chapters, the analysis focuses on two particular rooms, investigated in full detail as case studies: Room F and Room M. They were chosen for a more detailed inspection for two reasons. First, for pragmatical reasons; most spaces in the North Palace are either not completely researched or the reliefs are fragmentary. Room F is one of the few completely excavated rooms, which also retained most of its relief decoration, allowing for a detailed investigation of its visual program, which in turn stands as point of reference for other rooms with similar subject but fragmentary reliefs. Room M, on the other hand, preserved only a few of its reliefs, but its importance in the investigation of the royal image in the North Palace is given by its function as the throne room proper. As the main reception hall and throne room, Room M was consequently emblematic for the royal message and the royal image the king wished to transmit to the audience related to the North Palace. It was the royal setting meant to exalt the king's glory to its highest. The two rooms share the same subject matter: military campaigns. However, they had different functions within their suites, and this is the second reason they were chosen for close examination. While Room M was the main reception hall of the palace, Room F functioned as a bathroom within a secondary reception suite. A second bathroom space survives among the spaces of the palace, located in another suite, allowing for comparison and therefore a set of observations can be made concerning the relationship between location, function and subject matter of particular spaces within the North Palace. Because the visual narrative of Room F is complete and can be used as point of reference, it will be discussed first.

### **7.1. Case study: Bathroom F**

Room F (Barnett Pl. XVI-XXI) was an auxiliary chamber of an inner reception suite; the importance of the whole suite of Rooms I, H, G and F is suggested by its direct vicinity to the throne room suite. The suite was accessed from the central court and was not provided with any direct communication with the throne room suite. It comprised a large reception room, backed by a retiring room, almost similar in size, a vestibule and a bathroom. Depending on how large Room H actually was, the suite could stand both as a residential/ reception suite and a double-core one (if they were indeed equally large). The monumentality of the suite is suggested by the three doorways allowing access from the central court. While its

monumentality and location in the vicinity of the throne room suggest the space may have had a representative role (reception), the lack of direct communication with the throne room or the outer court provides it with a certain isolation, and it could have very well been a residential suite. Room F is the most secluded space of it, with no opening to the exterior, accessed only through Room G. The room comports some peculiar features both in terms of subject and architectural matters: it mixes military campaigns with protective figures, which are set in a niche in the wall towards Room I. The shape, size, location and – most importantly – the existence of the niche speak in favor of its function as bathroom. Most suites in all palaces accommodated such a space and many revealed the existence of pavement and drains.<sup>391</sup> It is unknown what type of activities were supposed to take place in such rooms – lavatories, baths for private or ceremonial hygiene or all of them. Although significantly smaller than other palatial spaces, the actual size of Room F<sup>392</sup> would have allowed for quite a number of persons or furniture. Functioning as a bathroom, Room F was still adorned with refined decorations. Such a space, retreated in its own suite, raises the question of motivation for its decoration. Was the room's decoration just the outcome of customary actions concerning palatial buildings<sup>393</sup> or did it bear a clear intentional message with a certain audience in mind? If the most frequent occupant was the king himself, can we then invoke a self-referential discourse?

Room F was guarded at its entrance by a pair of protective figures positioned on both jambs, facing towards Room G (**Pl. 7**). These were *Lulal* (the empty handed, bearded man

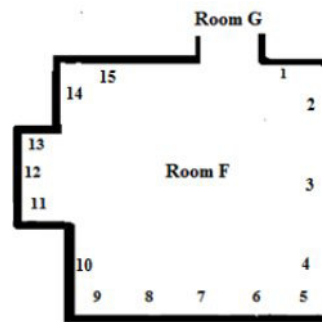
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<sup>391</sup> For a discussion on such spaces in the late Assyrian palaces and their supposed use (lavatories or private/ceremonial baths), see Kertai, 2015: 190-195. Note however, that there are no stone pavements recorded in the excavations in Room F. H. Rassam reported about the remains of a large drain passing under the floor of the room, but not if it was connected to a drain hole. See Rassam, 1897: 32.

<sup>392</sup> The room is considered small when compared to the other rooms of the palace, especially with the reception rooms, which are monumental in size. The size of Room F can be calculated on the basis of the existing slabs. Slabs 2, 3, and 4, covering a whole wall, measure together 6.14 m; this renders the surface of the whole room at 37.6 m<sup>2</sup>. As such, even one of the smallest rooms in the palace is actually very large. D. Kertai argues that the sizes of bathrooms in late Assyrian palaces vary from 25 m<sup>2</sup> to as much as 50 m<sup>2</sup>; this would position Room F among the largest ones of its kind. See Kertai, 2015: 8.

<sup>393</sup> Similar rooms in Sennacherib's Southwest Palace also bore reliefs. See, for example, Room VIII (e) of a similar reception suite, decorated with scenes showing tents engulfed within a fortified wall and various activities taking place inside, as well as a display of Assyrian soldiers and their horses. See Russell, 1991: 58, Fig. 34.

with horned tiara) followed by an *ugallu* (the figure with lion head, human body and bird legs). The latter bears traces of red paint on some parts of the body.



**Fig. 7.** Individual plan of Room F with the position of the slabs (drawing by author).

The walls were decorated with a military campaign against the Elamites, recognizable by their hairdo and beard. Initially, all its fifteen slabs were registered as having been discovered in good condition, but in the meantime, some of them got lost without trace, being known today only from drawings and photos (slab 10, 11 and 14), or by the discoverer's description in contemporary accounts such as Rassam's letters to Layard (slab 12). All the surviving slabs measure 228.6 cm in height (with varying broadness). The development of the scenes expands along the four walls of the room. The narrative is arranged in two registers, with scenes organized in two bands. The particularity of the room comes from a recess on the northwestern wall, which formed a niche (slabs 11-13), interrupting the military narrative. The niche was decorated with hybrid apotropaic figures.

### ***Description of slabs***

The upper register of Slabs 1 and 2 was divided in two horizontal bands (**Pl. 8**). The upper band showed scenes with Assyrian infantry and chariotry charging towards the right, and the lower band depicted Elamite soldiers in the marshes, moving towards the left, on a river filled with fish. The lower register of the two slabs showed the large-size king in his chariot, facing right, depicted on the full height of the register, preceded and followed by his royal entourage arranged on two bands.

Slabs 3 and 4 showed action in two registers as well (**Pl. 9**). The upper register rendered the Elamite city the Assyrian soldiers in the previous slabs were charging at. The city is depicted on the full height of the register. It is identified as Hamanu by a two-line inscription in cuneiform carved over the surface of the upper city wall:

“Hamanu, royal city of Elam,  
I surrounded, I conquered, I carried off its plunder.”<sup>394</sup>

The one making the statement is the king, speaking in 1<sup>st</sup> person, although his name, his titles, and epithets are not given. The cuneiform inscription succinctly describes the action taking place in the relief narrative – the attack on the city, the inevitable defeat, and its aftermath: its people and goods being brought in procession in front of the Assyrian king. What the text renders in addition to the image is thus the name of the city. The victory over this particular city is all the more important since it is identified not only by name, but by its status as royal city of the enemy. Its defeat emphasizes the power of the Assyrian king.

Square-shaped parts of the slabs framing the city of Hamanu were cut in antiquity. These slabs were set on the wall adjacent to Room C. The breaches, however, did not reach the corresponding relief slabs in the latter, since there are no such cuts in the slabs positioned there. A cut of another shape (with a round top) did exist on a slab in Room C, on this same wall, but further away, contiguous to Room G. It is not known if this niche communicated directly with an opening in Room G, for the reliefs corresponding there are not known. If Room C did not communicate with Court J as suggested by Turner,<sup>395</sup> it means it was set in a remote area, sharing this characteristic with Room F. The cuts in the wall in this case might have had the same function in both rooms. Considering the seclusion of these two rooms and the lack of communication with the exterior (if this was indeed the case also for Room C), one thinks of a ventilation system.<sup>396</sup> Since the holes apparently did not reach from one room to another, the ventilation system within the wall may have led upwards, to the roof. On the other hand, the shape of the cuts differ in the two rooms (square cut in Room F and round top cut in Room C), which might mean, just as well, that they had different purposes (maybe for something to be placed there). Light in Room F, if the roof was not open or the walls did not carry windows on their higher, unpreserved parts, must have been ensured through artificial means.<sup>397</sup>

The city of Hamanu is set on a river side filled with the dead bodies of the Elamites. The Assyrian soldiers are shown climbing its walls on assault leaders, while others are

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<sup>394</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 22.

<sup>395</sup> In his plans, Boucher does not mark an entrance there, but the slabs corresponding to this position in Room C are reported as destroyed, while those corresponding to Court J are not registered at all.

<sup>396</sup> See some remarks on ventilation systems in late Assyrian palaces in Kertai, 2015: 187-189.

<sup>397</sup> See Kertai, 2015: 189-190.

undermining its walls at the shelter of their shields. The Elamite warriors are charging arrows from the city walls, while others are depicted falling. To the right from the city, in the top band, Elamite prisoners are led away, moving rightwards. The second band continues the scene from the previous slabs with Elamite soldiers in the marshes now facing in both directions, along the river filled with fish and dead bodies.

The lower register of slabs 3-4 depicted a procession of Elamite captives – men, women and children, carrying their goods and arranged on two bands; they are advancing towards the Assyrian king and his suite, which are facing them in the previous slabs.

Slabs 5 and 6 covered the first half of the wall opposite the entrance (**Pl. 10**). The upper register continued in the top band the row of captives led away by Assyrian soldiers, moving towards the right, while in the second band it continued the marshes scene, only this time with women and their domestic animals hiding in the reeds. The scene of the marshes in the second band ends this way and a new scene with procession of prisoners begins. They are led by the slightly larger and helmeted Assyrian soldiers towards the right, paralleling thus the procession of captives in the top band. The lower register continued the procession of captives carrying their goods in bags, chariots, or baskets, arranged on two bands and advancing in the opposite direction, to the left, facing the king.

Slabs 7, 8, and 9, with the latter starting from the corner of the new wall, continued the procession of captives in both registers, in two bands each: rightwards in the upper register and leftwards in the lower one (**Pl. 11**).

Slab 10 (**Pl. 12**) depicted two bands of captives moving to the right in the upper register, while in the lower register it contained, from up to bottom, a scene of women and children hiding among the reeds on the bank of the river filled with dead bodies and fish, followed by a scene of captives led away, moving towards the left.

Slabs 11-13 formed a niche decorated with protective figures. The sides of the niche (slabs 11 and 13) were identical and they were organized in two registers. Slab 13 is now lost, while slab 11 is known from a drawing by W. Boucher (**Pl. 13**). In the lower register they show a creature with human head, horned tiara, and lion body, standing on all four legs, identified in the ritual texts as *urmahlullu*.<sup>398</sup> The upper register depicted a figure whose head is now missing, with human body and bird legs, most probably the *ugallu*. The bottom of the

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<sup>398</sup> Wiggermann, 1992: 52, 98, 181.

recess (slab12), now lost, was described when it was discovered as depicting “a lion-headed monster, with extended jaws, the tail of a scorpion and the feet of an eagle”.<sup>399</sup> The *ugallu* is part also of the pair guarding the entrance to the room. The figures are rendered facing the viewer, oriented thus towards the interior of the room. The *urmahlullu* appears now for the first time as relief subject in the palatial decoration. It too is identified from ritual texts and is ascribed the function of fighting back evil and it is prescribed for burial at the gate of the bathroom, playing thus the role of a gate-keeper of a specific place.<sup>400</sup> The lion-man in Room F, however, is placed in the niche.

Slab 11 (from which the lower part survives) provides further information in this sense, as it bore a cuneiform inscription on the reverse:

“You shall bar out the supporter of the evil head.”<sup>401</sup>

The inscription, written on the reverse of the *urmahlullu* shows thus the role it played: it is a guardian creature meant to provide protection against evil. The divine nature of the figure is suggested by the horned tiara it wears. The inscription, written on the reverse, was not meant for public display; therefore, it was not part of the visual message. It bore a message of its own nevertheless. An authority invested the figure represented here with a function. It is to be assumed that the “you” referred to in the inscription is the lion figure on the obverse. The creature is given thus the name of barring evil, as if for setting it into function. The relief acts therefore in the same way as the clay figurines used as foundation deposits at the doors of houses, which also carry on their surface their names and instructions. In Room F however, the *urmahlullu* is not confined to the entrance, but to the sides of the niche.

Slab 14 resumed the scenes in the slabs previous to the recession (**Pl. 14**). The upper register showed the procession of Elamite captives arranged in two bands and advancing towards the right. The lower register contained scenes in marshes and on the river side: in the upper part Elamites are hiding in the reeds nearby a square structure with an entrance. Beneath this scene the river broadens and boats driven by Assyrians are shown. The same

<sup>399</sup> Rassam, 1897: 32. Wiggermann lists the described creature as “other apotropaic monsters”, similar to the “lion-dragon”. See Wiggermann, 1992: 185.

<sup>400</sup> Wiggermann, 1992:52 (20.24); 98. The author argues that *urmahlullu*, the lion-man, would have a precise enemy to fight against – *Šulak*, a demon dwelling particularly in bathrooms, which has the appearance of a regular lion (see p. 98).

<sup>401</sup> Barnett, 1976: 40.



types of boats are shown in the reliefs of the central court J. They are transporting what seem to be Elamite civilians and advance towards the left. In the lower left corner, land is marked by a curved line separating it from water. From there on, the march of the Elamites led away and moving towards the left starts. In the upper right corner another scene begins, with two Assyrian bowmen charging arrows in the opposite direction, towards the right.

Slab 15 continues the previous action (**Pl. 15**). In the first register the procession of captives arrives in front of the Assyrian king triumphant in his chariot. He is preceded and followed by soldiers and the royal retinue arranged in two rows. Same as in slab 2, the royal pose is rendered in larger size, covering the height of the entire top register. The lower register shows in detail the attack on a second Elamite city, rendered in similar manner as the siege of Hamanu on slab 2. The city is depicted on the full height of the register. The attack comes from both sides (on the right side the attackers are placed on the previous slab 14). This time the city bears no inscription to identify it (or it was not preserved). It is located on a river populated with fish. However, unlike in the case of Hamanu, no depiction of dead human bodies was introduced. The Assyrians are shown with a full war machine: siege leaders, infantry, cavalry, and chariotry (and boats in the previous slab 14). The city defenders are shown shooting arrows from the top of the walls or falling from its crenels. To the right from the city the action is split in two bands. The upper band is reserved for the Assyrian attackers, while in the lower band the Elamites are shown hiding in the reeds, moving away from the city.

A few aspects can be underlined about the visual narrative of Room F. After being met at the entrance by the pair of real-size guardian figures<sup>402</sup> waving weapons in the air and about to strike, once inside the room, the visitor would have been exposed to a series of visual effects. The relief displays two narratives, arranged in two registers.

### ***The upper register***

The pictorial narrative in the upper register is “read” from left to right, that is, from slab 1 to slab 15. It begins with Assyrian soldiers charging at the city of Hamanu. The besieged city, depicted on the full height of the register, bears an inscription identifying it by name and status –a royal city, therefore a center of the Elamite might. It is placed on the banks of a

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<sup>402</sup> When their original heights are known, the slabs with such figures in the North Palace measure around 1.60 m (the doorjambs of Room B).

river, populated with fish and the bodies of dead Elamites. The city is framed on both sides (after two square cuts in the adjacent slabs) by scenes depicting Elamites in motion among reeds on the riverside. Since they are all carrying bows, they are to be identified as soldiers. A long procession of captives starts from there on. They are being led away from the city of Hamanu with their goods by Assyrian soldiers. The captives are arranged in two bands, with their procession developing around the walls of the room until they arrive in front of the Assyrian king and the royal entourage. The Assyrian king is rendered on the full height of the register, just like the conquered city, while the royal suite which proceeds and follows him is arranged on two rows.

### ***The lower register***

The narrative of the lower register is constructed symmetrically, but running in the opposite direction, from slab 15 to slab 1. However, there are differences in details meant to emphasize certain aspects. The visual narrative is “read” from right to left, starting from the right wall from the entrance. Like in the first register, the scenes arranged in two bands show Assyrian soldiers charging at another Elamite city, set, just like Hamanu, on the riverbank. The three door-like symbols preceding the depiction of the city, as well as the landscape details with the river broadening up indicate a different setting, therefore a different city. This time the river is populated only with fish; although the siege is depicted in detail, there are no dead bodies floating on the water. Again, the city is rendered on the full height of the register and it is framed, like in the upper register, by Elamites in the reeds on the riverside. However, this time the Elamites are civilians, most probably women and children. Unlike Hamanu, the second city does not bear any inscription, according to the preserved drawing and the accounts of the discovery. The broaden river line allows for the introduction of boats as part of the Assyrian war machine. They are used here to carry away the Elamites from the conquered city up to the ground, where the captives are further led away on foot. Such details of landscape serve as tokens of both authenticity for the narrated event, and as suitable pretext for displaying further Assyrian military resources. The procession of prisoners develops in similar fashion all around the walls of the room until it arrives in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot on slab 2-1.

### ***Discussion***

The immediate conclusion is that an effect of symmetry was sought in the display of the visual narrative. The same pattern is followed in both registers, only in reversed order: the

attack of the enemy city, its siege and conquer, captives led away, and the figure of the king overseeing the whole process. However, there are details inserted in the pictorial narrative which mark differences.

One city bears a name, while the other does not; Hamanu is associated with Elamite soldiers, the other one with civilians; Hamanu is associated with dead bodies floating on the river, the other city is not; and particular details of landscape singularize the two cities. It was important therefore for the rhetoric involved in the pictorial to draw attention on the city of Hamanu. Why so? It was probably done in order to give specificity and importance to the military effort, rendering the victory all the more important: Hamanu was a royal residence, center of the Elamite power, as the cuneiform inscription carved on its wall informs the audience. Even for those unable to read, the simple existence of the epigraph would have rendered the scene and the city important. The defeat of a nucleus of Elamite power stressed all the more the Assyrian might. This particular scene summarizes the whole campaign and the royal message – Ashurbanipal defeated the enemy in one of its centers of power.

The king in this context is represented on the lower register, closest to the viewer, while on the upper level the city itself is depicted at a short distance further. The importance of this arrangement is emphasized by its location in the room – the king and the city of Hamanu are placed on the closest visible wall to the visitor entering the room, to the left from the entrance, on slabs 2-3. The other arrangement with the portrayal of the king and the second besieged city were set on the right side from the entrance, but on the wall with a dead angle for the entering guest. This second representation of the royal figure would have become most visible when leaving the room, when it was faced directly.

Another noticeable aspect is the effort of adapting the slabs to the architectural demands. Slab 1, at the right corner from the entrance, is similar to the ending of slab 15, with some additional details. With the former, however, we witness an abrupt cut at its edge towards the door – the rear parts of a chariot and horses are amputated. The cut must have come in order to accommodate the slab to the dimensions of the narrow wall at the corner. The effect of the amputated reliefs would have been minimized by the dead angle of the narrow wall's location. Perpendicular on the entrance, the visitor coming into the room wouldn't have been able to see it. When leaving the room, the other wall from the entrance, larger and depicting the triumphant king, would have caught the attention.

As we have already seen, the defeat of Hamanu made the subject of yet another space of the palace, whose reliefs fell or ended up in Room S.<sup>403</sup> This allows for a comparison of treatment of the same subject within the palace. Both times the city is identified by an inscription inserted on its wall or above it. However, there are several differences in their renditions (compare **Pl. 16** and **Pl. 17**). The most striking one is the completely different landscape: in Room F the city is set on a riverside, with tall reeds growing nearby, while in the S<sup>1</sup> relief the city is positioned at the top of a mound, with wooded landscape (with dwarf palm trees). While in the former there was no trace of trees or hills, in the latter there was no trace of a river whatsoever or water vegetation.

This raises the question of actual landscape accuracy and the function of landscape in the economy of the reliefs; it seems rather that at times, landscape details were used for other reasons than markers of geographical and environmental realities, another argument that Assyrian images are not “snapshots” of places and events. Landscape details seem to have functioned in this case as artistic conventions for emphasizing certain aspects – a river can become pretext for underlying the grandeur of the onslaught produced by the Assyrians in the lines of their enemies, great enough to fill a river with their corpses, for example. Landscape also helps singularize particular scenes or guide the gaze of the viewer according to its lines. It also renders authenticity to the representations, not in the sense of contemporary realities, but diversity. However, commonly, a particular landscape which is considered in the Assyrian conventions to be representative is used to suggest certain geographical or topographical points.

The city itself was conceived differently in the two rooms: with three rounds of crenellated walls in Room F, while in Room S<sup>1</sup> the city has only two rounds of walls and no crenellations. The particular circumstance in which the city of Hamanu is depicted differs in the two rooms as well. In Room F the city is besieged and the action is rendered in full progress; the enemy is still fighting, but their fate is suggested by their falling bodies and the corpses floating on the river at the bottom. In the S<sup>1</sup> relief the city is being destroyed, its ramparts dismantled and the inner parts are already burning. The latter scene suggests total destruction. The epigraphs attached to the scene in the two rooms are identical up to one point: “Hamanu, royal city of Elam, I surrounded, I conquered, I carried off its plunder”. In

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<sup>403</sup> It was already signaled by Jacoby, 1991, when treating Assyrian cities in reliefs.

the S<sup>1</sup> relief, however, it continues with “I destroyed (it) utterly, I burned (it) with fire”<sup>404</sup> in total congruence with the pictorial rendering. The annals mention Hamanu being captured in the course of the two campaigns against Ummanaldas (Elam 4 and Elam 5) and it may be the two interventions that the two reliefs are depicting.

Even if the differences of details in the two rooms mean that different teams of artists were at work, or that one rendering precedes the other, it still shows that the artists were not bothered by the inconsistencies of rendering in the two rooms, but had another agenda in mind.

The protagonist of the narratives in Room F is clearly the Assyrian king. The visual narrative is constructed symmetrically, starting from both sides from the entrance (slabs 2 and 15) with the grandiose figure of the king, dominating triumphant from his chariot, adorned with the full set of regalia. The larger size of the king, occupying the full height of a register, would have had the purpose both to underline his particularly elevated status and to focus the attention of the viewer. The double image of the king functioned also as the frame of the whole plot developed in between.

It is important to note that the closest images the visitor would have been exposed to when entering and leaving were those of the already victorious king, showing the aftermath of the events. The Assyrian king can only be victorious by nature, while the actions displayed stand only to exemplify this axiom. The pose of the king is a static one, contrasting with the movement of the processions of captives moving to the right and left. Further on, on both sides from the entrance, a second larger depiction was displayed at a short distance in front of the king: the enemy Elamite city under siege. Just like the image of the king, the city is rendered on the full height of a register. Their particular larger size makes king and conquered enemy city congruent. The fact that the city is placed at a short distance in front of the king orientates the viewer in the direction of the events. The message from both sides of the entrance starts with the conclusion: the Assyrian king is the victor par excellence, while anybody challenging him is doomed to defeat. He is also the receptacle of the defeated city's strength: the flow of captives and their goods run towards him. The axiom was exemplified in Room F by the fate of a particular city – Hamanu, which was rendered importance by simply receiving an identity and most certainly was indeed well known to the contemporaries.

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<sup>404</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 25.

The analysis of the room raises several issues. The participation of Room F in the arrangement of an important reception suite renders it important too. The existence of the guardian figures at the entrance and the apotropaic figures depicted in the niche indicate the importance that the space and those undertaking their actions there be protected from evil. The carefully carved reliefs and all the visual effects they contained suggest that they were supposed to be viewed. The relief subject affiliates the room to the general theme of the whole suite: warfare. All the rooms of this suite, as far as the reliefs are preserved, dealt with various campaigns against Elam. Room F deals with an important episode of the first or the second campaign against Ummanaldas (Elam 4 or Elam 5). While in Elam 4 Hamanu is just one of the many captured Elamite cities (Editions Kh and G, the first ones to recount it, actually consider this affair as a campaign against the fortress Bit-imbi), in Elam 5 its capture is given more importance (in Edition F and A, which introduce it first). Its capture had the effect to make Ummanaldas fear the Assyrian power and flee. This subject was deemed fit for the decoration of a place serving as bathroom.

It is hard to appreciate who was the audience the reliefs were destined for. As bathroom used for private or ceremonial hygiene, we may assume that it was used by the king himself. Those offered audience in this suite could be a further public. If it functioned also as space for ceremonial ablutions, it may be speculated that those who entered it were at least the king himself and the specialists of the cleansing procedures. If so, the fact that a private space, addressing the king himself, was decorated with the same attention for effect and detail and even with the same subject matter as the most publicly exposed areas of the palace, including the throne room, allows for the conclusion that there was a coherent discourse throughout the space of the palace, which did not separate the real persona of the king from the ideal kingship represented in the reliefs. The king himself was exposed to the royal representations and the roles he ideally played, allowing him to internalize these roles.

The North Palace provides a second example of such a room: Room V in the Northwest wing. This was a small, square room, containing a niche in one of its walls. It too was accessed through an antechamber, Room T. However, neither of these two rooms was decorated, except for the entrance to antechamber T (and not to the bathroom proper), guarded by protective figures. These were *Lulal* and *ugallu* followed by a pair of two more facing *ugallu* in the upper register, and *urmahlullu* in the lower register (*urmahlullu* in this case is set at the entrance to the bathroom, exactly as prescribed by the ritual texts, unlike in Room F, where it was rendered in the niche). The relief at the entrance in Room T is thus

identical with the side reliefs of the niche in Room F. Nothing is recorded about drain fittings or stone pavement in either Rooms T or V. These two rooms were part of a quarter which functioned as a secondary access to the palace, tied directly to the entrance portico (Room S). While not having been finished may be an explanation, other possibilities should be taken into account for their lack of reliefs. A clue may reside in the location of the space within the palace. Room F was attached to the probably second most important area of the palace, that is, the secondary reception suite, and its function as bathroom was most likely connected to the activities the king undertook there. On the other hand, Room V belonged to another type of space, that is, an access hall in the rear side of the palace (but which was decorated with sculptures). Its guests may have been the king himself or any other attendants accessing the portal in the West wing (coming from or going to the possible park located beyond the portico), but also, as suggested by Kertai, those in charge with the surveillance of the access from the western portico, may have been accommodated in this small suite.<sup>405</sup>

The main difference between the two bathrooms, which determined the presence or absence of decoration, seems to be their affiliation to suites fulfilling different purposes: representative royal function in the first case and non-representative, domestic, function in the latter (along the access way to a secondary exit/ entrance). In the case of Room V, it was important that the space be protected from evil and therefore guarded by apotropaic creatures at the entrance (of the antechamber T), but, unlike Room F, it did not require any imagery with the king. The reasons for which a place was considered representative or not is another issue: a secluded bathroom such as Room F apparently played such a role, while the façade of the throne room in the outer courtyard, the most exposed area, which would prepare the approaching visitor for the encounter with the king, did not. Or it did, but its representative role for the royal image of Ashurbanipal was expressed differently, and not through reliefs.

## **7.2. Case study: Throne Room M**

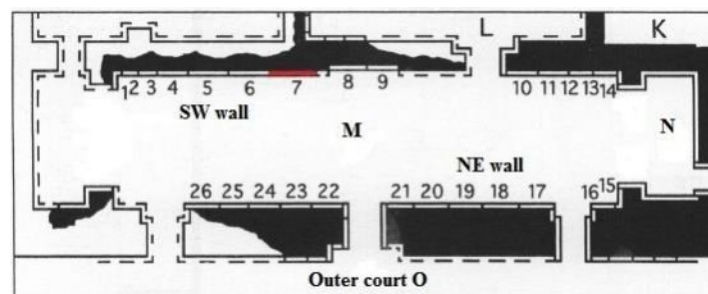
Unchanged over the years, the throne room suite of the late Assyrian palaces stood in between the outer and central courtyards; it was directly accessed from the outer court and communicating with the inner court through a retiring room. Its function and position made it the most exposed area of the palace, while its impressive size allowed for the accommodation

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<sup>405</sup> Kertai, 2015: 179.

of a significant number of people.<sup>406</sup> Its location brought the king closest to the various administrative offices, which usually were displayed around the main courtyard.

The throne room in the North Palace was positioned at the end of a set of stairs from the outer court, marking a first variation in the traditional plan. Most probable an alcove-like space was rendered at both its sides, one arranging the access towards the ramp and the other accommodating the throne of the king. The latter side remained largely unexcavated and, although the alcove pattern can be understood from the ground plan, its degree of openness and exposure to the rest of the room is not known.



**Fig. 8.** Individual plan of Room M with the place of the relief slabs.  
Red color marks the location of slab 7 (after J. Reade, 2001: Fig. 3).

As already mentioned, a particular feature of the throne rooms in general was their multiple subject depiction. From the surviving slabs, it shows that more military campaigns were represented in the throne room of the North Palace as well. The narrative is fragmentary and many slabs are now lost or were recorded as badly damaged. Unlike in Sennacherib's throne room, the vestibule N in the North Palace was not decorated.<sup>407</sup>

### 7.2.1. The Southwest wall

Around fourteen slabs decorated the Southwest wall. Of these, only slab 7 and slabs 12-13 are known and they are in a fragmentary state. Nothing is known of slabs 1-3, although

<sup>406</sup> From the various scale renditions in the plans published over the years, a real estimation of the surface of Room M cannot be appreciated. Barnett specifies in his description that it measured around 424 m<sup>2</sup>. Barnett, 1976: 45. As such, it is a large throne room. Ashurnasirpal II's throne room was, for example, 470 m<sup>2</sup>. The throne base in Ashurnasirpal II's throne room measured 3 X 2.4 m and weighted 15 tons. Porter, 2010 (d): 89.

<sup>407</sup> In Sennacherib's throne room, the vestibule was decorated with military campaigns in Babylonia, while the throne room proper displayed military campaigns in the West. The retiring room and the bathroom of the throne room suite also contained scenes of military exploits. Russell, 1991: 257-258.



slab 3 was initially reported as “more or less perfect” in W. Boutcher’s plans; 4 and 6 were not found; and 5 is said to have been ruined. The drawing of slab 3, which most certainly had been made at the time of its discovery, is now missing from the portfolio.

Slab 7 (**Pl. 18**), known from W. Boutcher’s drawing and two small fragments now in the Louvre, depicts a scene in two registers separated by a horizontal narrow band. From the upper register only part of a horse in larger size survived. It was standing on the ground represented by a horizontal layer filled with scale pattern and trees, which in Assyrian pictorial conventions renders mountainous landscape. The lower register shows Assyrian troops – infantry, cavalry and slingers – aiming their weapons towards the left side, where most likely a city was represented in the missing parts (on slab 6). The attack and its aftermath are depicted simultaneously in the same scene. The action in the lower register is also placed in a clearly mountainous landscape, with explicit mountain shapes and scale patterns. On the left side, the course of a river populated with fish starts at the bottom of the band. Dead bodies of the enemy lay on its shore; one of the defeated enemies is shown among bushes with his arms spread apart and tied to a bar. It is the only rendering of an enemy having received such a treatment in the known reliefs of the North Palace. Two such figures are shown tied by their arms and legs to the ground with their members spread apart in Ashurbanipal’s reliefs of Room 33 of the Southwest palace.<sup>408</sup> No bar is part of the torture procedure, however. Such representations are rare in the Assyrian decorations altogether, only few examples being recorded; analogy with texts indicate that they show flayed characters.<sup>409</sup> This suggests a rather exemplary rendering, meant to emphasize the importance of the military action; the usual practice was not the massacre of the defeated population (with some exceptions), but its deportation to Assyria or tribute, both in reliefs and inscriptions. While in Room 33 the two figures are shown in great details in apparently different phases of their agony, in slab 7 of Room M the actual act of torture is not shown; what the visual rendering depicts is most probably the aftermath. Interestingly, the body of the victim is actually covered by the depiction of a bush, while other dead bodies are shown

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<sup>408</sup> See Albenda, 1970: fig. 5.

<sup>409</sup> They are known in only two previous instances: in one relief of Sargon II in Dur-šarrukin (with captives being brought in front of the king in Room 8, a reception room of the monumental suite in the western side of the palace) and in a relief of Sennacherib, related to the capture of Lachish (in Room 36 of a monumental suite also). Albenda, 1970: 146, 148. See images of Sargon II reliefs in Room 8 in Albenda, 1976: Pl. 74-78 (especially Pl. 78 with the flayed character) and images with the Lachish reliefs in Russell, 1991: 206 (fig. 111).

in full view. The flaying was applied as punishment for rebellion against the Assyrian king, the inscriptions suggest. When considering a small fragment of unknown provenance, depicting a flayed character in landscape with scales pattern, J. Reade ascribed it to Room M of the North Palace, in connection to slab 7.<sup>410</sup> The author argues for the representation of a battle in the Zagros, against the Mannean king Ahšeri, proposing an identity for the flayed character – Rajadišade, the commander of a Mannean fortress.<sup>411</sup> The recovered collections of epigraphs don't cover the Mannean affair at all. While the annals (Editions B, D and C) do mention Rajadišade being caught and killed, nothing is said about him being flayed (or, for that matter, about two such characters as the second fragment discussed by J. Reade would imply, if indeed originating from Room M).<sup>412</sup> Other characters in the annals are explicitly said to have been flayed: Editions B, D and C recount the flaying of mostly officials of the Gambulian king Dunnanu (the conclusion of Gambulu); they are explicitly mentioned in the collections of epigraphs concerning the Teumman-Dunnanu cycle as well or in the captions in Room 33 in relation to a scene of such practice.<sup>413</sup> The later Edition A mentions this punishment with regard to the Arab Ajammu, son of Te'ri and brother of the Arab king Abiyate (the conclusion of Arab 4).<sup>414</sup> Thus, when the punishment was applied to some specific character, it was made clear in the texts. However, in all these cases the flaying of the rebels occurred only after they were captured and brought either to Arbela or Nineveh. Or, in slab 7 this is done during the siege of a city and most importantly in a mountainous region. Another edition of Ashurbanipal's annals may provide some clues about the visual rendering in slab 7. Edition Kh introduces a military campaign against the mountainous Elamite fortress

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<sup>410</sup> Reade, 2001. The so-called "Wellesley eunuch" was previously considered a fake by P. Albenda, 1970.

<sup>411</sup> Reade, 2001: 73.

<sup>412</sup> Borger, 1996: 34, 221 (B§23, III 61-62).

<sup>413</sup> Editions B, D, and C written during the Babylonian rebellion and close to Šamaš-šumu-ukin's death (in 649 BC, 648 BC and 647 BC) contain a detailed account about punishments on certain figures involved in rebellious actions against Ashurbanipal. This occurs at the conclusion of the campaign against Dunnanu the Gambulean, who aided the Elamite king Teumman and gave shelter to Assyria's enemies. Two magnates of Dunnanu (Mannukiahhe and Nabûusalli), said to have offended Ashurbanipal with their messages, had their tongues cut out and were flayed in Arbela. For the entry in the annals, see Borger, 1996: 108, 228 (B§41, VI 83-87); for the epigraphs in the lists (Texts A and B), see Russell, 1999: 163 (28, 28v) and Borger, 1996: 303 (28 III 27-29); for the epigraph above the scene with the flaying of two characters in Room 33 of Sennacherib's palace (slab 4), see Gerardi, 1988: 31. The names rendered in the annals are not preserved either in the relief epigraph, or in the collections.

<sup>414</sup> Borger, 1996: 69, 249 (A§83, X 1-5).

Bit-imbi (close to Der and most important stronghold guarding the passage to Elam).<sup>415</sup> A passage of this military campaign (the earliest account of the Elam 4 campaign) contains fragmentary, but interesting information.<sup>416</sup> It mentions the name of Šamaš-šumu-ukin; a person being hit by an arrow, but remaining alive and making his way to Elam; and the son of the person – Barburu – being caught by Ashurbanipal in Bit-imbi and flayed there, at the sight.<sup>417</sup> In Edition Kh, the Elam 4 campaign against the Elamite fortress Bit-imbi was put in connection with and seen as continuation of the complex rebellion initiated by Šamaš-šumu-ukin (see discussion of Edition Kh in Chapter 2). The fortress Bit-imbi was the refuge place for various rebellious figures who managed to remain at large and continued to pose a threat for Ashurbanipal after the quell of Babylon. Although nothing is known about this Barburu from other sources, in the rhetoric of Edition Kh he was the son of a figure considered important and threatening enough to generate a military campaign on the part of Ashurbanipal. The later Edition A and Ashurbanipal's correspondence suggest that the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate, leader of the strongest of the Chaldean tribes controlling the Sealand and former subject of Ashurbanipal, took refuge in Elam after the repression of the Babylonian rebellion. He was the most wanted person on Ashurbanipal's list, and his capture was important enough for the Assyrian king to threaten Elam with war and to actually conduct it during the reign of the Elamite king Ummanaldas.<sup>418</sup> Nabû-bel-šumate was actually the grandson of Merodach-baladan II, who managed to seize the throne of Babylon for a time during Sennacherib; it is imaginable that, once Šamaš-šumu-ukin was dead, he may have still attempted to gain the throne of Babylon for himself. It might be that in our passage of Edition Kh the wounded character who managed to flee to Elam was Nabû-bel-šumate and that Barburu was thus his son (see description of Elam 4 in Edition Kh in Appendix 2). An exemplary punishment by flaying of Barburu would have accounted for the actual failure to capture the main protagonist. As for the rendering in the relief, the scene was set in a conspicuous place (as the whole slab 7): to the immediate right of the seated king when the throne was positioned in the recess of slabs 8-9 and on the opposite wall from the main,

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<sup>415</sup> The military affair of Elam 4 is rendered as part of the Edition C in Borger's work, but recognized to have actually been introduced only in the following Edition Kh by Novotny in 2008.

<sup>416</sup> See Chapter 2 and Appendix 1 in the thesis concerning Edition Kh.

<sup>417</sup> Borger, 1996: 159, 236 (C§68, X 1-12).

<sup>418</sup> See Borger, 1996: 59-60, 242-243 (A§62) for the relevant passage in Edition A and Waters, 2002 for a letter of Ashurbanipal to the elders of Elam demanding the extradition of Nabû-bel-šumate.

middle entrance of the room (if the protocol had the visitor enter through there),<sup>419</sup> slightly deviated to the left, in the direction the guests would have turned when advancing towards the enthroned king at the Southeast end of the room.

On their part, one text of the collections of epigraphs of the second cycle (Tammaritu II-Šamaš-šumu-ukin-Arabs) – Text D – renders a sequence of entries concerned with several characters being flayed (the sequence of epigraphs 58-60).<sup>420</sup> Epigraph (58) is very fragmentary, but referred to several persons (uses a plural) suffering decapitation and flaying, but the identity is not known. Epigraph (59) mentions Nabû-zer-ukin, subject of Ashurbanipal, who broke his oath and joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin; the hand he used to charge his bow at the Assyrian troops was burned in punishment and he was flayed. Finally, epigraph (60) mentions another person (name not preserved), from Bit-Dakkuri, also joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin and suffering the same punishment by hand burning and flaying. Still from Edition Kh of the annals, in the account of the Elam 4 campaign against Bit-imbi, we learn that the city of Bit-Dakkuri, Aramean fortress in the Nippur region, was one of the Babylonian cities “which had detracted themselves from Assyria and counted themselves to Elam”, their people being brought to Assyria together with spoils from Elam and killed according to their crimes.<sup>421</sup> However, this last part would suggest they too received their punishments in Assyria and not Elam. Text D which contained these entries does not preserve any colophon to confirm the relationship with the North Palace reliefs, but it may have been a proposal of visual narrative at some point, which may have or may have not materialized in the final depictions. Besides, Bit-Dakkuri would not correspond to the mountain-like background in the preserved fragment of the relief, since it was located in Babylonia.

That an Elamite fortress and a campaign taking place in Elam and not Mannea or some other place was depicted in slab 7 would better fit the subjects of the rest of this wall, which will be discussed further.

Slabs 8 and 9 were left un-carved and set in a recess in the wall, which, as mentioned, most probably marked a secondary space for the royal throne at certain times. Because slab 7 was set right before the blank recess (see Fig. 8 above), we propose that its scenes stood both

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<sup>419</sup> Given the grandour of the main, middle entrance of the throne room, it would be expected that the king himself was the main character to use it.

<sup>420</sup> Borger, 1996: 311 (58-60).

<sup>421</sup> Borger, 1996: 162-163, 236 (C§74).

as starting point and triumphant ending on the two narrative lines developed along slabs 1-7. Thus, for the upper register, slab 7 functioned as the end of the visual narrative, while for the lower register, it marked the beginning. If we assume that symmetry through reversal of order was aimed as a visual effect (by analogy with military reliefs in the better preserved Room F), the lower register was the reversed order of the upper one. Since we know their content at one end of the narrative, we may speculate about the end we don't know as being its reverse. Starting from what little evidence slab 7 presents, we propose here a hypothetical reconstruction of what might have been depicted on the previous slabs (see diagram in **Pl. 26**). Judging by the large size of the surviving horse legs in the upper register and the pose details, one of the horses following the royal suite was rendered there.<sup>422</sup> The king in his chariot would have been depicted on slab 6. Facing to the left, he would have received captives from that direction. At the end of this thread the conquered city where the captives are marched away from would have been depicted. Reversely, the lower register would have started its narrative from slab 7 with the siege of an enemy city, followed by captives being led away leftwards, towards slabs 1-2, where the king in his chariot would have received them. The visual narratives of the two registers in slabs 1-7 would have been framed by the two settings reserved for the throne location – slab 1 in the proximity of the throne at the Southeast end, and slab 7 at the edge of the undecorated recess, the secondary place reserved for the throne, opposing the main entrance. If we are correct, at both ends the depiction of the king triumphant in his chariot, juxtaposed to the scene of the Assyrian army conquering the enemy city, would have conspicuously been set in the nearest proximity of the real king: near the throne dais at the end of the room in the lower register and near the recess in the upper register. In both cases the living king would have been directly identified with the victor depicted in the images and, following the direction of movement, would have become the generator of the action and the harvester of its fruitful effects.

The identity of the cities which might have been depicted in these scenes is not known, but it is obvious, by the conventional use of the scales and trees pattern in slab 7 (in both registers), that they were set in a mountainous area. For the city depicted in the lower register on slab 7, we proposed the identity of the Elamite fortress Bit-imbi. If so, the king in his chariot supposedly represented at the end of the narrative thread of the lower register (on slabs 2-1) would have reviewed a significant procession of captives. The family of the Elamite king Teumman, whom Ashurbanipal had decapitated before, was captured at Bit-

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<sup>422</sup> See analogy with Room F, slab 1-2, **Pl. 8** (lower register).

imbi and counted as spoils, together with Elamite archers and musicians, according to the annals.<sup>423</sup> As for the action in the upper register, a key may be offered by a relief fragment presumed to come from Room M.

The fragment now in British Museum (BM 124793) depicts a scene with a row of ten characters in profile, advancing towards the right, in mountainous landscape (**Pl. 19**). Three figures in a chariot drawn by horses (missing) lead the way: an Assyrian bearded driver, facing right, another Assyrian bearded soldier holding tight the wrists of and facing the third character. The latter is depicted with a turban and a pointed beard, identifying him as an Elamite royalty. They are followed by two bearded Assyrian soldiers on foot, one of them bringing along two horses. Three Elamite figures follow with their hands raised in a submissive gesture. The last character in the row draws the attention towards this point. The posture of the figure is depicted differently than the rest. He is led by the wrist by a bearded Assyrian soldier, while turning his head to look back and raising his other arm towards that direction, unlike all the others who face rightwards. This last figure is depicted with a similar turban and pointed beard like the character in the chariot.

A different event is paralleling this scene: right underneath this last figure with turban, at the bottom side of the scene, among the trees, an ibex is depicted being stalked by a lioness from behind. The feline is placed underneath whatever must have been the object of gaze of the last figure in the row.

Since both scenes are depicted in the same register, and more so in a paralleling manner, their sense must have been reinforced by one another. Even if a complete understanding is hampered by the fragmentary state of the piece and the uncertainty about its placement in the imagery context of the room, some observations can still be drawn. It is important to note that the artist opted for a stalking scene and not the final outcome of such a hunt – the ibex is not dead, not even aware, but is just about to experience the violence of the lioness. Nor did the artist choose a chasing scene when the action would have already been ignited. The victim does not seem to have spotted the lurking danger, but the viewer is already confronted with the follow up: he or she knows that a brutal encounter with no chances for the grazing animal will take place. This rendering suggests rather than it actually displays an act of brutality, increasing the tension for the spectator. The viewer is given all the elements in order to

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<sup>423</sup> These details are preserved in Edition G, but may have also been contained by the fragmentary Edition Kh. Both editions were written in the same year 646 BC. See Borger, 1996: 166-167, 237.

anticipate the violent outcome. Above the last figures in the row (therefore also above the ibex) a caption with a cuneiform inscription of six lines was inserted (fragmentary preserved):

“...] the weapon of Assur, my lord,  
...] from the mountain, place of his refuge,  
...] x of Murubiši,  
...] X of Assur, my lord,  
...]Ummanaldas, he seized and  
...] he brought him before me.”<sup>424</sup>

The inscription identifies thus the place of the action – the mountain side and the Elamite city of Murubiši,<sup>425</sup> the action itself, and the main character – the capture of Ummanaldas (king of Elam) and his being brought in the presence of the king. The voice, as the last line suggests, is that of the Assyrian king himself, speaking in first person. Nothing is kept of the beginning of the inscription. But it is made obvious that the victory was achieved with the assistance and support of the great god Assur (the god’s weapon and his support are invoked). However, someone else is credited by the king with the capture of Ummanaldas (*isbat* “he seized” – Preterit, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular), but the identity of the protagonist is unknown (the weapon of Assur?). What remains unclear is the depiction of two figures wearing the turban of the Elamite royalties. The inscription is set above the second figure walking on foot, not above the one in the chariot, and Edition A, the only one introducing the capture of Ummanaldas, does not clarify the situation (Ummanaldas was caught alone).<sup>426</sup>

The relief fragment reveals one detail of composition – rendering meaning through juxtaposition of scenes: the enemies being carried away to the king and lioness just about to kill her victim. It is interesting to note that, on its part, Edition A of the annals mentions how the Assyrian king hunted Ummanaldas like a falcon for his every move in the mountains. In the annalistic text it is the king himself who captured him and the Murubiši region is not mentioned.<sup>427</sup> What can be rendered in first person as accomplished by the king himself in text is differently rendered in the visual representation – the king is never engaged in the action proper, he is never shown fighting, but he dominates all the actions by his positioning at the end of the narrative thread, overlooking the whole process.

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<sup>424</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 23.

<sup>425</sup> Murubiši may have been Marubištu, identified from circumstantial evidence as a fortress in the mountains. See Waters, 2000: 21, 80.

<sup>426</sup> Borger, 1996: 70-71, 249 (A§84).

<sup>427</sup> Borger, 1996: 249 (A§84, X 13-16).

Given the rightwards movement in the fragment, we propose that it belonged to the upper register in the series 1-7. Thus, the narrative in the upper register would have started from slab 1 (in reverse from the second register) with the depiction of the Elamite city Murubiši (located in the mountains) from where Ummanaldas is caught and towards which he turns his head. He is being led away to finally arrive in front of the Assyrian king in his chariot, facing leftwards.

After the recess, two other slabs would have fitted, but their subject is completely unknown. They were followed by the space of the doorway towards Room L. After the doorway, slabs 10 and 11 are a bit of a puzzle. First, they were recorded as well preserved by W. Boutcher's first plan, while later they were said to be ruined.<sup>428</sup> After these gaps, slabs 12-13 met the corner of the room; they preserve part of their subject. Slabs 10-11 would have been the prerequisites to the subject still preserved in slabs 12-13. The latter contained a relief arranged in two registers. The upper register contained scenes showing a city on fire and Assyrian soldiers carrying booty away from the city, advancing towards the left. Among the goods carried off there is also a bull statue. The association with the bull has led scholars to believe that the city may have been Susa.<sup>429</sup> The landscape is indeed one associated with Elam – same landscape is rendered in Room 33 for the city Madaktu (Elamite capital of Teumman and then Ummanigaš). The city is set close to the banks of a river, at the lower edge of the register, in which a dead body, wheels of chariots and weapons are represented among fish. The beard and hairdo of the dead figure seems to indicate indeed an Elamite. No further fragment survives to show if prisoners were marched away and how they looked like. If this was indeed Susa, a narrative concerned with the second campaign against Ummanaldas

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<sup>428</sup> See plans in Barnett, 1976: 21-23, Plates 6-8.

<sup>429</sup> The assumption is made on the fact that a bull statue is being transported as booty from the conquered city, while Editions F and A of the annals, when recounting the destruction of Susa, mention its ziggurat being adorned with bronze horns. Oxen horns on a ziggurat appear on slab 9 of Room I in connection to the installment of Ummanigaš on the Elamite throne. The relief itself does not preserve any epigraph. But in the lists of epigraphs there is an entry recording that Ummanigaš was installed in Susa and Madaktu. The same epigraph is inserted on the scene of installment of Ummanigaš in Room 33 of the Southwest palace (slab 5, lower register, upper band), but in this case there is no ziggurat depicted. See Nadali, 2007: 62 (fn. 12) with previous bibliography. See the entry in the epigraph list (Text A) and Room 33 relief in Russell, 1999: 160 (17). For the text of Editions F and A about the destruction of horns on ziggurat, see Borger, 1996: 53, 240-241 (F§32, V 19-21).



was rendered (Elam 5), when the destruction of Susa took place (accounted in great detail in Editions F and A).

The lower register (**Pl. 20**) parallels at the top the water course from above, but this time populated with fish only, introducing thus a brand new sequence. The landscape, dominated by palm-trees bearing rich fruits, suggests a Babylonian setting. The narrative depicts a procession in three bands arriving in front of the king. In the lowest band the procession showing captives – Babylonians by their hairdo and beard – continues underneath the king. In the top band two courtiers are introducing kilted Assyrians carrying different kinds of objects, including chariot parts, followed by captives. The middle band shows an Elamite royal figure with turban and pointed beard, holding a raised arm in submission. The Elamite is followed by three other characters, each with a different dress and head wear (**Pl. 21**). Behind these figures, Assyrian soldiers introduce chopped off heads of enemies and a pile of bows to two Assyrian scribes with writing tools. Next, horses are brought along to be registered. The king is represented on the right side of the scene, occupying the full height of the register, facing the procession from his chariot. He is positioned right underneath the depiction of the sacked city (of Susa?) in the register above. The juxtaposition of scenes is not random; the king in full triumph is aligned with the city whose gates are on fire and whose goods are being taken away. A caption of nine lines is introduced in the space in front of the king:

“I, Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria,  
who, at the command of the great gods, attained  
the desires of his heart. Clothing, jewelry,  
royal insignia of Šamaš-šumu-ukin,  
faithless brother, his harem, his *šut-rešis* (officials),  
his battle troops, his state chariot, his lordly vehicle,  
whatever equipment of his palace, as much as there is,  
people, male and female, young and old, they made pass before me.”<sup>430</sup>

The cuneiform inscription introduces the titles of Ashurbanipal: like in the other epigraphs he is “king of the world” and “king of Assyria”, underlining the universality of Assyrian rule. It also introduces the presence of the great gods (although unnamed), who supported his actions. Although the relief seems to introduce several figures in front of the king, the inscription refers to only one name: Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Ashurbanipal’s brother from the Babylonian throne. Nothing is said of his brother’s fate; most certainly none of the figures in front of the king is meant to stand for Šamaš-šumu-ukin himself, since the annals say he perished in flames during the siege of Babylon. Šamaš-šumu-ukin is simply called the

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<sup>430</sup> Gerardi, 1988: 47.

“faithless brother” and he is stripped off of his royal insignia, which are now made to pass in the hands of Ashurbanipal, at the command of the great gods. The divine will came in complete harmony with the king’s own, personal desires, the text tells further. Šamaš-šumu-ukin was Ashurbanipal’s brother (possibly even older), and his position on the throne of Babylon was established by their father, Esarhaddon, in his succession treaty. Šamaš-šumu-ukin was therefore the legitimate occupant of the throne of Babylon, but as he rebelled against and fueled further enemies of Assyria, he became a breaker of the established order, a “faithless brother”. The throne of Babylon was a position Šamaš-šumu-ukin did not know how to keep, determining therefore the intervention of the great gods and of Ashurbanipal as their tool. The emphasis of the inscription is on the brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, disregarding the other figures present, and stressing the transfer of power towards Ashurbanipal, who acts at the divine command. All of Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s belonging, which made up his office of kingship – insignia and people alike – are made to pass before the Assyrian king. The imagery reproduces this idea precisely. The review of Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s goods is mentioned in almost identical wording in an entry of an epigraph collection (epigraph (61), the first preserved in Text E).<sup>431</sup> The tablet preserves in all 4 consecutive epigraphs, all on the reverse (the obverse contained a ritual text). The entry used in the relief (61) was followed by an epigraph (62) introducing two names – Nabû-šalimšunu, the charioteer, and Manukibabili, son of Nabû-šalimšunu. The next epigraph (63) identifies yet other characters calling them the sons of Ea-zer-ikiša, of Bit-amukkani (an Aramean city between Nippur and Uruk). The last epigraph in the series (64) introduces Ashurbanipal in first person stating that at the command of the gods the kings dwelling in their palaces bowed in submission to his yoke. Next, the text mentions the bows of Tammaritu II, king of Elam, which he had charged in order to do battle against Assyrian troops. The text becomes fragmentary, but it suggests that those bows were captured. If these epigraphs were a description (post or just draft with proposals) of the scene in slabs 12-13, they suggest that the visual narrative concerned the punishment of several figures that joined the uprising of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, from his charioteer and the latter’s son, to some leading Aramean figures from southern Babylonia. They may have been rendered in the slab 12 proper (maybe the severed heads recorded by the scribes) or in the preceding and now missing slabs. The Elamite royalty may stand for

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<sup>431</sup> See epigraphs of Text E, including epigraph (61) in Borger, 1996: 311-313 (61-64); see also Weidner 1932-33: 196-197 (61-64) and Luckenbill, 1927: 401-402 (1092-95). The reverse of the tablet contains an incantation text.

Tammaritu II who initially joined the Babylonian uprising and then submitted to Ashurbanipal after his defeat by his servant Indabibi. It remains that the rest of the figures in front of the Assyrian king stand for the kings who bowed down in submission to the Assyrian yoke, although they are rendered with clasped hands and not with the submissive gesture of the Elamite king, and the bows are those mentioned in connection to Tammaritu II and the twist of situation – they were once armed to aim against Assyria and are now counted among Assyrian possessions. As such, the visual rendering would mirror the universalist title in the caption of the relief. Editions C of the annals, the first one to introduce the Babylonian rebellion, also emphasizes the change of situation regarding the archers of Tammaritu II, who became part of the Assyrian army, after they were once assembled to fight the Assyrian troops.<sup>432</sup> Edition F does not recount the Babylonian rebellion proper or the spoils taken from Babylon, but mentions Tammaritu joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin, his dethronement by a slave and his flight to Nineveh for help. Edition A offers a much abbreviated reference to the goods taken from Šamaš-šumu-ukin's palace, stressing instead the slaying of the survivors as offerings to the ghost of Sennacherib.<sup>433</sup> While the annals suggest that Tammaritu II came before Ashurbanipal in submission at Nineveh, the relief in the throne room projects the whole scene in a Babylonian environment. As such, it does not depict the submission proper of Tammaritu II (which is described in other epigraphs and represented in a relief fallen in Room S in much more humiliating terms and pose), but shows rather a later stage. That is, if accuracy and coherence with the representations of the events in the annals was ever an issue for the scribes.

Another series of epigraphs from a tablet which preserved the colophon to confirm its relation to the *bīt redūti* – Text A of the Tammaritu II-Šamaš-šumu-ukin cycle – might have been an early proposal for this scene in the reliefs. Epigraph (51) mentions the submission of Tammaritu II after he had previously allied with Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but fell victim to a rebellion in his own palace and took refuge at the Assyrian court, praising the great Assyrian gods. Epigraph (52), in which the king speaks in first person (*anaku*) enumerates in a different version the possessions of Šamaš-šumu-ukin scattered on the ground before him (Šamaš-šumu-ukin's tall standards, his chariot, the soldiers who rebelled with him and their relatives); the rest of the rebels, the text says, were caught in the mountains and brought to Nineveh on camels, for the entertainment of the Assyrians. Epigraphs (53)-(56) mention the

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<sup>432</sup> Borger, 1996: 149, 230 (C§61).

<sup>433</sup> Borger, 1996: 40, 235 (A§40, IV 64-65).

capture of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's soldiers, of the inhabitants of Borsippa and Babylon and the killing of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's officials.

In all, the concentration of figures and actions in this visual narrative stand for the successful conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion, which had as result the strengthening of Ashurbanipal's kingship as ruler of Assyria and Babylonia and overlord of various kings and Elam.

If the sack of Susa is indeed represented in the upper register, it is worth noting that Šamaš-šumu-ukin's regalia are being reviewed right underneath of it, in the context in which the annals (Editions F and A) mention the Assyrians finding at Susa the royal paraphernalia that Šamaš-šumu-ukin had previously sent to Elam for securing Elamite support in his rebellion.<sup>434</sup> !

The content of the slab 14, at the corner of the wall towards antechamber N, is not known. By comparison with slabs in similar position elsewhere in the palace (slabs 1-2 in Room F, **Pl. 8**), it must have contained the royal suite following the chariot of the king and the end of the procession of captives in the lower register, while the top register may have shown Assyrian soldiers coming out from the city set on fire, forming a curve. Judging by the content of slabs 12-13 and based on analogies with other scenes in the palace, and the effect of symmetry by reversal, the narrative after the doorway to Room L may be reconstructed as follows: Slabs 12-14 functioned as the end of the narrative thread in the lower register, with the king receiving the royal insignia of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The goods and the captives were brought from the left side, where the city of origin (Babylon) must have been depicted (probably under siege). Reversely, slabs 12-13 (and 14) were the beginning of the narrative in the upper register, showing an Elamite city under siege (Susa?) and booty carried away towards the left side. They must have arrived in front of the king in his chariot overlooking the whole scene.

The frequent display of scenes with the king receiving captives in Room M may be explained by the particular role it played as throne room and by the special architectural features it implied in order to accommodate the throne in two different locations. For each location a special arrangement of the wall decoration was necessary in order to enhance the royal protagonist of both the visual narrative and the real persona.

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<sup>434</sup> Borger, 1996: 240 (F§32/ A§57).

As it looks, the visual program on the Southeast wall may have contained 2 or 3 series (Pl. 27): 1) In slabs 1-7, representing the surface between the two places where the throne was accommodated, the narrative was concerned with a military campaign in the mountainous regions of Elam. The landscape and the flayed person (in the lower register) were considered to indicate the campaign against the mountain Elamite fortress Bit-imbi, a military affair during which many other Elamite cities in the North of Elam were captured. While the fortress itself was the aim of the attack in editions Kh and G (without explanation of reasons), it became the background for the first campaign against Ummanaldas in Edition F (apparently for his dethronement and installation of Tammartu II, former fugitive at the Assyrian court). The wars against Ummanaldas are finally explained in connection to Elam as place of refuge for the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate, grandson of Merodach-baladan II, still posing a threat to Assyria concerning Babylonia even after the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The upper register may have shown the capture of Ummanaldas in his mountain fortress Murubiši. This set of slabs may have thus grouped together representation of interconnected events, which had at their center Bit-Imbi and Ummanaldas. Their stories are rendered and entangled differently though than the annals and their thematic arrangements of the respective girrus. 2) Two slabs remain completely unknown right after the recess. They may have had their own short narrative or be the beginning (respectively the end of the visual narrative in the slabs after the doorway to Room L). 3) The series between the doorway to room L and the end of the Southwest wall (slabs 10-14) were concerned with two subjects – the devastation of an Elamite city, perhaps Susa (upper register) and the defeat of Babylon and the quell of the Babylonian rebellion (lower register). If indeed these episodes were rendered in the reliefs and in this arrangement, it becomes evident that there was no chronological thread. Šamaš-šumu-ukin's defeat (the Babylonian rebellion) and Susa (Elam 5) are rendered together on one side of the wall, while the capture of Bit-imbi (Elam 4) and the capture of Ummanaldas (Elam 6) are organized together on the other side of the wall. Something else united these military affairs – they were all part of the very complex political situation of the general uprising against the Assyrian order, which did not end with the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, as he was only a leading figure in a network of interests. This suggests what the annals have already pointed out – an ongoing effort to render and explain the great uprising and its echoes (rebels eluded capture and were still a real threat) in all its complexity in a manner acceptable for the royal rhetoric. The resulting arrangement in the visual depiction also suggests that the reliefs rendered a different configuration of these events than the editions of the annals (and of the epigraphs collections concerned with this subjects).

If our assumptions are correct, the Southwest wall of the throne room would have depicted the king in triumph four times. The arrangement of the narratives on the walls would have been conceived in relation to the two locations reserved for the king's throne – at the end of the room and in the recession across the main entrance.

### 7.2.2. The Northeast wall

At least 12 slabs decorated the opposite wall, which depicted military campaigns in Egypt. The scenes were organized in two registers also, but only parts of the lower register survive, either in relief or in drawings. No piece survives for the upper register. Slabs 15-16, at the corner wall towards antechamber N, were recorded as destroyed and their subject remains unknown. Next came the space of doorway (*a*) towards the outer court.

The fragmentary slab 17, the only one which survives as such, depicts the siege of an Egyptian city on a river bank, populated with fish and crabs (**Pl. 22**). Assyrian troops are charging from both sides, displaying a full siege war machine: teams of bowmen behind tall shields charge at the defenders of the city, while other Assyrian troops are escalating the city walls on assault ladders or set the walls on fire. The Egyptian soldiers defending the city are shown with a specific feature: they are wearing head gears with an upright single feather. The headgear identifies them as Ethiopians soldiers (of Taharqa).<sup>435</sup> Many are shown falling from the walls under the assault of the Assyrians. The scene is organized on three intertwined bands. The Assyrian soldiers are arranged on the upper two, flanking the city under siege, while the city itself is rendered on the full height of the first two bands. From a central gateway of the city, the horizontal alignment is interrupted by a procession of Egyptian warriors led outside by Assyrian soldiers, stepping downwards in a curve and taking a turn to the left. The movement connects thus the middle and the lower bands.<sup>436</sup> Egyptian warriors (wearing short kilt and feathered headgear), with their hands tied at their back, and civilian captives are marched away by Assyrian soldiers. Two of them exit the city gate with severed heads of enemies in their hands. Behind the curved line another series of captives is depicted, marching also to the left. They are the head of a procession from the following slabs 18-19.

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<sup>435</sup> Barnett, 1976: 47.

<sup>436</sup> S. Reed calls such stylistic devices “vignettes” or images with no definite borders, whose edges fade into the background. They direct and focus the viewer's attention to a certain point, creating thus tension in the pictorial narrative. See Reed, 2007: 103.

This time they are civilians – men, women, and children, being led away with their goods and animals.

Slab 18, reconstructed from W. Boutcher's photo, shows three rows of captives being led away by Assyrian soldiers and moving leftwards (**Pl. 23**). In the upper two bands they meet the back of the Assyrian troops besieging the town in slab 17. In the lower register, the captives form a continuous row with those in the previous slab from behind the curved line. Plenty of animals are led away with the prisoners – horses and herds of cattle and sheep. At the bottom of the scene the watercourse continues.

Slabs 19-20 are known only from Boutcher's drawings. They show the siege of another Egyptian city, attacked by the Assyrian troops from both sides (**Pl. 24**). The scene displays again a whole Assyrian besieging arsenal, from bowmen behind tall shields, fighting in pairs on the left side, to soldiers on ladders escalating the city walls in the middle, to infantry with bows and spears mounting a ramp forcing the access into the city. The defenders of the city are shown falling from its walls. This time they don't wear any specific headgear. The watercourse at the bottom of the scene continues here from the previous slabs. It is now populated with fish and dead enemy bodies. Same device of interrupting the horizontal disposure of the fighting scene is used here by the artist to draw the attention of the viewer: on the left side of slab 19, behind the Assyrian soldiers, a stream of water is depicted running vertically, around the besieged city, into the horizontal bottom line river. Beyond it, the procession of captives and livestock starts moving leftwards in three bands, with Assyrian soldiers marching them from behind, and it continues so on the previously shown slabs.

Nothing is known of slab 21. After it comes the space of the central doorway of the Throne Room (*b*). Slabs 22-23 after the doorway survive as drawings and one small fragment of relief (**Pl. 25**). They show bearded Assyrian soldiers holding horses by their bridles and a suite of beardless Assyrians wearing long robes standing in a row in front of them. They all face towards the right. The people and the animals are recognizable as the rear part of the royal suite which accompanies the king in the victorious pose, placed behind the royal chariot, as for example, on slabs 1-2 in Room F (see **Pl. 8** for comparison). Such a scene marks the end of a visual narrative. Consequently, the king had to be depicted somewhere on the following slabs 23-24, also facing towards the right to most certainly a procession of captives arriving in front of him. This procession may have been rendered on the now missing slabs to the end of the wall until the doorway (*c*) (slabs 24-26). Nothing is known

about the Southeast end of the room and the wall after doorway (c), close to the throne setting (slabs 27-28). This part may have shown a city under siege which the presumptive captives on slabs 26-24 were marched away from. It is impossible to know if the series after the main doorway towards the throne actually showed scenes concerned with Egypt affairs or some other encounters. If they did, the whole lower register of the Northwest wall in the throne room was dedicated to Egypt. The upper register remains a complete mystery.<sup>437</sup>

No epigraph survives from this wall which would help identify the cities under siege and the precise campaigns. From the annals recounting the two campaigns conducted by Ashurbanipal in Egypt (**Egypt 1** and **Egypt 2**), the cities in question may be Thebes, Memphis, as well as another city from those captured by the Assyrians (Sais, Tannis etc.). The Egyptian affair was rendered by all the annalistic editions from their first issues to the last and always on the first position. No representation of the king survives from the reliefs on the Northeastern wall. However, since the movement of captives from their besieged cities in slabs 17-20 runs leftwards (that is, towards Room N), it is expected, as seems to be the rule, that the king would have been rendered facing them and reviewing them from his chariot. This triumphant moment most likely would have fit slabs 16-15, at the corner, beyond entrance (a). If this should be the case, a symmetrical rendering of the royal character would have been aimed at, since slab 16 parallels slab 13 on the opposite wall, where the king is shown receiving the royal insignia of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. The part of the narrative with the two conquered cities in a row would have been framed to fit half of the Northeast wall – from the main entrance where the narrative starts, to the end of the room towards antechamber N, where it ends (slabs 21-15). It would begin with the siege of a first city (slabs 21-19) from where captives are marched away (slab 18), continuing with a second conquered city (17) and more captives (17), and finally arriving, after the break of entrance (a) in front of the king in a victorious pose (slabs 16-15). Beyond the main entrance (b), slabs 22-23 would have been the ending of another narrative series, showing the triumphant king. Its starting point would be placed around entrance (d), in the proximity of the king's throne. We assume another city was besieged and captives taken away. Just as well nothing is known of the upper register. A hypothetical reconstruction of the narrative thread on both walls in the

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<sup>437</sup> Its existence is suggested by the size of the surviving slabs in Room M. Fragmentary as it is, the surviving slab 13 on the Southeast wall, which preserves the two register arrangement, measures 213 cm, while the surviving slab 17 on the Northwest wall, showing a single register, measures only 114 cm in height. See heights in Barnett, 1976: 45, 47.



throne room and the positions where the image of the king may have been rendered in connection to the entrances and the real royal persona is rendered in **Pl. 27** at the end of the thesis.

To summarize, the throne room was concerned with several sets of military campaigns, one of the particularities of such spaces in late Assyrian palaces. On one wall, which accommodated the throne in a secondary setting, it depicted the conclusion of the campaign against Šamaš-šumu-ukin and the following interventions concerning the Elamite territory, which remained a base for further anti-Assyrian actions (destruction of Susa, capture of fortress Bit-imbi and capture of Ummanaldas). On the opposite wall it depicted the military campaigns against Egypt, as far as the lower register is concerned. The upper register is completely unknown. While Egypt was one of the first military campaigns Ashurbanipal had to fight after his ascension to the throne in order to settle rebellions, the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his allies started some seventeen years later in his reign, with further incursions in Elam. Their selection for the throne room renders them as greatly important for the royal rhetoric of Ashurbanipal and as terminus port quem for the decoration of the throne room.

If symmetry and reversal seems to have functioned in the case of the southeastern wall, a different technique was used in the depiction of the Egyptian affair (two cities being conquered in a row). When the throne was set opposite Room N, the enthroned king would have had to his left the royal representation receiving captives from Bit-imbi (with many important figures) and the siege of the Elamite city Murubiši where Ummanaldas is caught from. (We don't know what the king would have had to his right side). When the throne was opposite the main entrance, the real king would have had the royal image receiving Ummanaldas and the siege of Bit-imbi to his right side. (Again, nothing is known about what he would have to his left side). In either position, if the relief narrative is correctly reconstructed in our analysis, the real king would have been positioned in conspicuous points where military actions start and where their booty flows. The Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Susa scenes would have been available for a guest mostly if the protocol had him enter the throne room through the doorway furthest away from the throne (doorway (a), see **Pl. 27**).

## VIII. Conclusions

The thesis had set as aim to find out the program of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, that is, the message the palace would have built about the king Ashurbanipal at the time and for the purpose it was built, at the center of the Assyrian realm (the capital Nineveh). The thesis proposed that the program would be puzzled together by exploring the royal representations the North Palace conveyed through its architectural, textual and visual expressions. In the process, the thesis sought to investigate how the concept of kingship was planned and built in this particular setting and how it was negotiated between ideal representations of kingship and the particular historical background which generated the construction of the palace.

### **Assembling the pieces**

For reaching these goals, the North Palace was first contextualized within the line and range of late Assyrian palaces (**Chapter II**), because while palace building was a royal prerogative and means of manifestation, not all Assyrian rulers built palaces with their reliefs and not all the palaces built by one single king during his reign actually bore reliefs with his exploits. The investigation showed that the palaces bearing reliefs were constructed in various historical conditions, proving no single pattern of occurrence, being rather connected to specific historical backgrounds. Between Ashurnasirpal II and Sargon II, in a time-span of more than two centuries, only one case of a palace with reliefs of its builder's exploits is recorded (Tiglath-pileser III's at Kalhu); during this time the palace of Ashurnasirpal II and its reliefs were never altered. With the Sargonid kings it became more common for the king to initiate the building project of a royal edifice displaying reliefs of his accomplishments. Within the dynasty, the historical background against which such an edifice was built differed from one ruler to another. Sargon II may have been driven by his doubtful ascension to the throne and the civil war in which it occurred to start building the new capital and a new palace at Dur-šarukin quite early in his reign, in order to strengthen his legitimacy. Sargon's death on the battlefield and the abandonment of his body, which bespoke loss of divine support, may have determined his rightful successor Sennacherib to move away from Dur-šarukin and make Nineveh the new capital of the empire, where he built the largest Assyrian palace, whose work took over quite some years during his reign. The assassination of Sennacherib by his sons (and Esarhaddon's brothers), who craved the throne, may have determined Esarhaddon to introduce quite a number of innovations regarding palatial

building programs and practices concerning palatial reliefs. Sennacherib's apparently unusual succession arrangements, which had a younger son nominated as heir, came with a set of newly introduced practices – loyalty oaths to the crown prince and the official entering the *bīt redûti* “succession house”, mentioned now for the first time in the sources. Esarhaddon, later in his reign, expanded the range of palaces which could bear reliefs. The arsenal (military) palace was made to bear reliefs with the king's achievements and the building project was celebrated in lengthy annalistic inscriptions with apologetic prologue stressing his nomination in the “succession house” (*bīt redûti*) and ascension to the throne.

The early years of Ashurbanipal's reign saw a need to insist on his legitimate ascension to the throne in, among other royal manifestations, a palatial building context (perhaps even the *bīt redûti*).<sup>438</sup> Later in his reign, after 653 BC, there was an urge to display his military victory in a specific military matter (against Teumman and Dunnanu) in one room (a lateral entrance from a terrace) of a monumental suite in Sennacherib's palace (Room 33), which still functioned as the main royal residence of the empire. Just a little later, around 646 BC, a full scale project of a palace with extensive decoration glorifying his deeds was commenced and materialized in the North Palace. The edifice was recommended as former *bīt redûti* – “succession house” – and annex of the main royal palace and it preserved the same name (at all times Ashurbanipal refers to the palace as the *bīt redûti*) after its rebuilding in larger size as royal residence for Ashurbanipal. Previously, Esarhaddon was the first to undertake building projects concerning the succession house, but did not celebrate the fact in royal inscriptions (only brick inscriptions). All in all, as a royal residence to bear reliefs with the king's achievements, the North Palace was a novelty in the palace building projects.

Secondly, the thesis considered the annalistic editions concerned with the construction of the North Palace. **Chapter III** has shown that the annals celebrating the North Palace were part of a whole process of building projects and texts celebrating the king's military exploits. There were three waves during which annalistic texts were issued in connection to building projects. The analysis has shown that each edition emphasized and tried to explain a certain political context, suggesting it was that precise political tension that generated both the building program and the commissioning of the annals. According to the recovered sources and if this is not just an accident of discovery, these challenges appeared at three stages in Ashurbanipal's reign: at the beginning of his reign; starting with his 15<sup>th</sup> year of reign, when

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<sup>438</sup> The *bīt redûti* may have been celebrated by one of the Edition E of the annals.

the largest amount of annalistic editions was issued; and in his 30<sup>th</sup> year of reign. For each such situation a different royal image was emphasized over others, drawing on a pool of possibilities and configuring them in various ways. It was suggested in the analysis that the early editions (Editions E, one of which may have been written in commemoration of some work on the *bīt redûti*)<sup>439</sup> should be understood in connection to Esarhaddon's death during a march against Egypt (although due to illness), which may have had its potential of tensions (loss of divine support?) and leave room for contesting his succession arrangements and thus Ashurbanipal's position, especially since this arrangement was not common practice (younger son on the Assyrian throne and eldest son on the Babylonian throne, under Assyrian lordship). The tension was addressed through work on a palace and temple, and commission of texts with apologetic introduction emphasizing Ashurbanipal's appointment as crown prince and recounting the sources of legitimization for his position. The stress was on his learning skills and wisdom, signs of divine favor, which led to his selection as heir by Esarhaddon. The victory against Egypt was rendered first (although chronologically it had been preceded by another) and projected as a re-installment of Esarhaddon's order in Egypt and Ashurbanipal being the natural continuator of his father's work; this strengthened Esarhaddon's image as successful conqueror in the West and his own as his rightful heir. Clues in the text suggest that a Babylonian audience was also involved, their acceptance of him as overlord, in spite of his brother's occupying the Babylonian throne, being thus one of the aims. The second wave came with the most numerous editions. They were composed against the background of the great Babylonian rebellion led by Ashurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin and its follow-up episodes extending on many more years after the latter's demise until most leaders joining this uprising were captured or killed. The complexity of the political situation, with a war against his own brother – the legitimate occupant of the Babylonian throne, with a great deal of participants involved, constant changes of loyalties and various rebellious figures remaining at large, generated a cascade of editions, at times even two within a single year, which tried to address various tensions and finding materiality in building programs of temples and city walls. Their epitome was the construction of the North Palace soon after the quelling of the Babylonian rebellion. The texts commemorating it

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<sup>439</sup> Even if there was no real need of Ashurbanipal undertaking work on the *bīt redûti*, since Esarhaddon apparently already reconditioned it not too long before, the fact remains that, if indeed the *bīt redûti* is celebrated in one of the Editions E of the annals, the challenge addressed found its response in work on the "succession house" and text with apologetic prologue, stressing the entering in the *bīt redûti* in the process of ascension to kingship.

stress the events following the defeat and death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, contain an apologetic prologue, again underlining Ashurbanipal's appointment as heir, but configured differently than his first annalistic editions. Emphasis is put now on his being the sole legitimate and successful continuator of a dynastic line, rather than on his personal skills. Efforts in trying to integrate all its complexities and adapt them to a glorifying royal rhetoric are visible. It is in connection to these efforts of explaining such complexities that *girru* arrangements were used for projecting the military encounters, rather than simple enumeration as in the first annalistic editions. The last of these editions – Edition A, written in commemoration of the North Palace – contains an appendix after the military affairs and just before the celebration of the palace building project, in which enemy kings are made to carry the Assyrians king's couch in a cultic ceremonial and a foreign king brings gifts, recognizing his majesty. In other words, Ashurbanipal is depicted indeed as the king of the world and pious priest of the gods. The third wave came when the political situation was challenged by the Cimmerians led by Tugdammu, which threatened to invade Assyria. The royal image proposed by these last editions was determined by Ashurbanipal's position at the time – king of both Assyria and Babylonia, addressing both audiences. It draws greatly on the image of the traditional Babylonian ruler, emphasizing his image as builder-king and minimizing the bellicose aspect – the military encounters are all brief. The war against Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Babylon is also briefly dismissed. Instead, divine intervention which slays his enemies is introduced. Again the military section is a linear enumeration, insisting this time on the last account (the Cimmerians), which offered him suitable setting for presenting himself as Assyrian and Babylonian king. This last wave of Editions was connected only to temple building projects.

The investigation has shown that particular historical challenges were answered through making use of the tools the king traditionally had at his disposal – building projects, including palaces and their decoration with reliefs and inscription writing – but the particular nature of events found a reflection in the outcome. The Babylonian rebellion involving Ashurbanipal's own brother and legitimate occupant of the Babylonian throne, his death caused ultimately by Ashurbanipal's war, and the bitterness inflicted upon Babylon and its inhabitants were answered with a full scale construction work on the “succession house” as royal residence, its adornment with Ashurbanipal's achievements, commissioning of annalistic inscriptions with apologetic prologue and a specific literary device for organizing the military matters as to explain complex chains of political events. The writing of the annals were conditioned and shaped by the historical events within the expectations that a king has to have his annals

written and passed to future kings. But the particular complexity of the Babylonian uprising, with rebellious episodes preceding it and many threats still following it, had the scribes adapt a device for explaining the situation so that it exalted the king – the thematic arrangement of campaigns in *girrus*, which was not used in the early editions of Ashurbanipal's reign and were dismissed in the last stream of editions.

Once the Babylonian king was defeated and dead, a triumphant statement could have been made, but a special framing was needed, as Šamaš-šumu-ukin was Esarhaddon's heir designate in Babylon, just as Ashurbanipal was in Assyria. The "succession house" as building project was connected in its building accounts to the succession issue, brought back in the royal rhetoric and recounting Ashurbanipal's selection to the throne and his entering the *bīt redûti*.

Thirdly, the thesis investigated the collections of epigraphs, which functioned as tools in the conception of visual representations in the palace reliefs, as various stages of drafts for the visual narratives to be carved in the reliefs or perhaps even accounting scenes already existing on the reliefs (**Chapter IV**). The survey has shown that in the process of conceiving the visual representations of the king several options were taken into account and negotiated among those engaged with the information, including the king himself, as suggested by some colophons which specify the text being read in the presence of the king. In some instances there are quite a number of differences between the various collections; epigraphs referring to the same event provide different details from one another (although keeping with the same idea of the triumphant Assyrian king). All this indicates that the process supposed a great deal of reconsideration until the final outcome on the palace walls. A historical event was manipulated as to find the most suitable way to emphasize the grandeur of the Assyrian king, with proposals and amendments before the final visual depiction was settled. The lists with epigraphs were not dated, suggesting that they were not presumed to circulate outside this environment of written support for relief decoration. However, even when they were descriptions of what was yet to be carved on the slabs or guides for the masons, and even though they were made to circulate within a restricted environment, they used the same official expression of the royal inscriptions. Those in charge with the creation of the reliefs and the king himself were thus right from the beginning exposed to a glorious image of the royal persona. The comparison of the collections of epigraphs with the same specific topics rendered by the annals showed that they used different sources. Specific details of the epigraphs are nowhere to be found in the annals and the other way around.

Fourthly, the thesis investigated the reliefs (**Chapters V-VII**) of the North Palace. This has shown that two general subject matters were displayed on the walls of the North Palace.

1) The suites of rooms were all decorated with military affairs. As in previous palaces, there was no relationship between the function of the room or suite and the subject matter of the reliefs – military affairs were deemed suitable for the decoration of reception rooms, retiring rooms, bathrooms or the central court. Some spaces were undecorated and the case study of Bathroom F suggested that rather than unfinished state, the explanation might reside in the affiliation of the respective space to a representative suite, in which case it bore reliefs.

2) The system of passages enabling communication between the various suites and entrances were all decorated with hunting or garden scenes. Larger passages displayed actual depictions of hunting and contained no epigraphs to explain the actions (Rooms S and C). Narrower corridors showed garden scenes or attendants going and coming from hunt (Rooms E, A and R). An unknown space whose reliefs were found out of their original context contained hunting scenes and epigraphs to explain them, with references to the king's universalist titles and divine implication in the hunt. Scenes with no epigraph in a large passage (portico S), would receive one in this unknown location. Secondary passages and liaison halls were not decorated, but protected by guardian figures. Both themes involved variations. Military subjects were mostly of the type siege and conquer of enemy city, captives led away and king in his chariot receiving them and facing the whole action. The king is never shown engaged directly in the battle, but he is rendered so in hunt and performing ritual. Epigraphs helped arresting the view of the visitor, identifying precise cities, campaigns or characters and in general conferring authenticity to the victorious representation. Variations also occur – processions following the victory and possible libation over a severed enemy head, installation of an Elamite king by Assyrian troops or submission scenes and royal banquet in the presence of the queen. The hunting subjects too presented variations – from the hunt proper of lions and other animals to libation over the dead carcasses.

It seems that the scenes of the reliefs were conceived with their location in mind and with conspicuous places either for the depiction of the king or for some culminating, tension inducing scene. The protective figures seem to have been positioned mostly independently from their ascription by the ritual texts, with no particular pattern of distribution throughout the palace.

No explicit connection between the fragmentary relief and the annalistic texts can be made, suggesting that other sources were used in the composition of the reliefs and there was

no preoccupation of putting the representations of these events in accordance in the annals and the reliefs, but were conceived quite independently from one another. Many renderings in the relief cannot be identified on the basis of the annals. On their part, the collections of epigraphs show differentiated aspects – while those of the Teumman-Dunanu cycle seem to cover the whole program of the rooms dealing with this subject (Room I and Room 33), those of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin-Tammaritu II-Arabs series do not cover the whole program of a room. Some military campaigns recognizable in the reliefs are not represented in the collections.

### **The program**

The North Palace seems to have been a royal edifice of a rather modest size. Once inside the court of the palace, a visitor would have been met with an undecorated façade of the throne room, the most exposed space of the palace, which normally would have impressed the visitor with monumental colossi and decoration of tribute bearers. The large size Southwest Palace of Sennacherib, which must have still functioned as the main administrative centre of Ashurbanipal's empire, discarded tribute bearers, but contained great scale colossi and annalistic inscriptions. Small size protective figures of *Sebbeti* were the only depictions to the outside, framing the main entrance to the throne room. They would have been too small to be noticed from anywhere else but from close range. Instead of monumental colossi, the small rendition of the *Sebbeti* was preferred, and their choice was perhaps connected to both their apotropaic and warrior functions; if they would have been recognizable by the Assyrians (given their mention and description in ritual texts for expelling evil from any house), it is not clear how a foreigner would have perceived it. It may be that the lack of decoration was compensated by the newly introduced set of stairs, which would have separated the throne room from the outer court and would have created a vertical distance from visitors to the king; this separation wouldn't have been significant though, as the stairs couldn't have been too high. The throne room itself retained the very large size of such representative spaces, and the doorway jambs were still guarded by large size hybrid creatures meant to bar out evil.

The throne room proper where the kings would have been seen enthroned – in two locations – was decorated only with military subjects and was concerned with several sets of military campaigns, one of the particularities of such spaces in late Assyrian palaces. Art historian I. Winter has suggested that military narratives, with their easy to follow grammar,



would have been readably accessible to a larger and more various audience, as the viewer would not be required to share a background of deeper implications with the creators of the images (like cultic or mythological scenes would imply).<sup>440</sup>

The reliefs in the throne room are very fragmentary. Starting from the surviving reliefs with their recognizable subject matter, the annalistic account on the same subject and the artistic conventions observed in other spaces of the palace, the thesis proposed a reconstruction of the visual narratives. The wall opposite the entrance, which would accommodate the throne room in its second location, was concerned with the conclusion of the Babylonian rebellion with several episodes gathered in a culminating scene, and the following interventions concerning the Elamite territory, which remained a base for further anti-Assyrian actions: capture of Elamite fortress Bit-imbi, where rebels found shelter, capture of Elamite city of Susa, and final capture of Ummanaldas, king of Elam. The arrangement of episodes on the wall would not be necessarily in chronological order, as the reliefs sought to generate effects of symmetry and juxtaposition of scenes for creating horizontal and vertical messages conveying easily the grandeur of the victorious king. The other wall preserved only the reliefs in the lower register and they depicted the campaigns against Egypt. The upper register is completely unknown.

These were thus the events considered most suitable to be the setting of Ashurbanipal's majesty. It has been suggested in the field of study that the military campaigns of the throne room were chosen for their geographical location as to render the boundaries of the empire. As such, the throne room of Ashurbanipal would have the Babylonian campaign stand for the South, the Egyptian campaign for the far West, the Elamite campaign for the East and the fragmentary relief with mountainous landscape for the North.<sup>441</sup> While this may be so, given that the last scene cannot be identified with certainty, the North would imply campaigns in Urartu, which did not occupy such a prominent role in Ashurbanipal's annalistic texts (nor in his correspondence for that matter). In the view of the close reading of all the sources, it became clear that both the annals and the reliefs were concerned with other aspects than geographical arrangements. While Egypt was one of the first military campaigns Ashurbanipal had to fight after his ascension to the throne in order to settle uprisings, the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and his allies started some seventeen years later in his reign,

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<sup>440</sup> Winter, 2010 (b): 39-40.

<sup>441</sup> Winter, 2010 (b): 38.

with further incursions in Elam. Their selection for the throne room renders them as greatly important for the royal rhetoric of Ashurbanipal. The Egyptian affair, which always retained the first position in the enumeration of Ashurbanipal's military victories in the annals, although it was not the first one chronologically, provided the basis for strengthening his position on the throne as the rightful and successful heir of Esarhaddon (who died on march against Egypt). At the time the North Palace was built, Egypt was long out of Assyrian control, having been united by Psammetichus. There was no attempt to regain it according to the sources; nor is there any account of its having been lost (but for a very brief reference in Edition A, but the stress being of Gyges of Lydia). On its part, the Babylonian rebellion and its aftermath was the most tensed political situation (and probably longest) Ashurbanipal had to face. It was most likely the challenge in response to which the North Palace was built. Like the annals, the visual arrangement in the throne room treating this affair shows the effort to explain its complexity, but it is differently configured for visual effects – Susa and Babylon together on one side; Bit-imbi (our proposition for the mountainous landscape) and the capture of Ummanaldas on the other.

The Arab affairs, which in the annals are intertwined with the Babylonian rebellion, are also introduced in the throne room suite, but they were given their own space altogether in the retiring room (Room L).

What these two campaigns had in common was their relationship to succession issues. The campaign against Egypt confirmed that Ashurbanipal's appointment to the throne was the right choice, despite the apparently unusual succession arrangement of Esarhaddon and despite the latter's death during the march to Egypt. The campaign against Šamaš-šumu-ukin was a campaign against his own brother, appointed as king of Babylon by their father Esarhaddon in this same unusual procedure. The Babylonian campaign ended up with the death of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, which was resolved in the reliefs of the throne room by a scene of transfer of the royal insignia of the Babylonian king to Ashurbanipal, with no mentioning of the latter's death in the inscription. What the inscription and the climax scene did stress instead, as statement of the whole throne room was Ashurbanipal's position as king of Assyria and of the whole world through depictions of successful campaigns pouring reaches into the country, foreigners paying homage and transfer of power over Babylon. All this was achieved, the epigraph in the culminant scene specifies, at the command of the great gods.

As for the royal persona in this royal setting, when the throne was set opposite Room N, the enthroned king would have had to his left the royal representation receiving captives from Bit-imbi (with many important figures) and the siege of the Elamite city Murubiši where Ummanaldas is caught from. (We don't know what the king would have had to his right side). When the throne was opposite the main entrance, the real king would have had the royal image receiving Ummanaldas and the siege of Bit-imbi to his right side. (Again, nothing is known about what he would have to his left side. In either position, if the relief narrative is correctly reconstructed in our analysis, the real king would have been positioned in conspicuous points where military actions start and where their booty flows. The Šamaš-šumu-ukin and Susa scenes would have been available for a guest mostly if the protocol had him enter the throne room through the doorway furthest away from the throne (doorway (a), see **Pl. 27**).

The modest look on the outside and the general size of the palace itself (especially compared to the "Palace without Rival" of Sennacherib) may have been connected to the place the palace occupied on the citadel – in the very proximity of the temples of Nabû and Ištar and perhaps the Sin-Šamaš temple. The building accounts explicitly say the palace was not made to be too high out of respect for the temples around. The undecorated throne room façade may have still been part of the royal message, by its contrast to previous palaces. It may have implied the king's piety in relation to the gods' abodes nearby. Within close range the large size "Palace without Rival" of Sennacherib would have still accommodated the royal court and the main central administrative offices, leaving space for the North Palace to actually function as royal residence and reception.

While military subjects in the representative spaces (throne room suite, secondary suite with all its spaces from reception room to bathroom) may have addressed a more heterogeneous audience through its easy visual language which would have readily conveyed the message of the always victorious king with specific examples of campaigns to confirm it, some spaces within the palace show minute details, imperceptible to an unfamiliar viewer; this would be the case with the banquet scene, abounding in small scale details not identified by epigraphs. Beyond the circles involved in the building of the respective narration, no future audience can actually be expected to notice it and understand all its implications. It may be assumed thus that certain spaces with their reliefs, after having the message internalized by those who created them, would have addressed only the king himself and close entourage and not so much a more various public.

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### **Dictionaries**

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## Appendix 1

### Chronological chart of Ashurbanipal's reign (669-c. 630)

Ashurbanipal's chronology is a problematic issue, due to the nature of the sources documenting it: the eponym list breaks after the year 649 BC; the Babylonian chronicles go no further than 667 BC; the military campaigns of Ashurbanipal's annals are not recorded by eponym and their main arrangement is not chronological. For this reasons, the chronological chart presented here is hypothetical and has only the role of orientating the discussion.<sup>442</sup>

- 669** (8<sup>th</sup> month) Ashurbanipal's father, king Esarhaddon, died during a march to Egypt to quell the rebellion of Taharqa;
- (9<sup>th</sup> month) Ashurbanipal ascended on the throne of Assyria;
- 668** Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Ashurbanipal's brother, ascended on the throne of Babylon, according to the succession treaty of Esarhaddon;
- Capture of the king of Qirbit after the latter's raids at the borders of Babylonia (**Qirbit**);
- 667** Military campaign in Egypt against Taharqa, with the capture of the city of Memphis (**Egypt 1**);
- King Iakinlu of Arwad willingly submitted to Ashurbanipal (**Arwad 1**);
- c. 666-665** Gyges of Lydia acknowledged Assyrian supremacy and, threatened by the Cimmerians who had destroyed the neighboring kingdom of Phrygia, requested an alliance with the Assyrians (**Lydia 1**);

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<sup>442</sup> A. K. Grayson proposed a reconstructed chronology of the major events in Ashurbanipal's reign by correlating firm dates extracted from the existing Babylonian chronicles, oracle texts, astronomical observations, everyday documents and dates from the documentation of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, Ashurbanipal's brother on the throne of Babylon, with the events narrated in the king's annals. Because there is no available chronological chart following Grayson's study, the thesis provides a proposal built on Grayson's model, reconfigured according to subsequent punctual studies on one or another of Ashurbanipal's campaigns, Elamite history and later disambiguation of his annals. See Grayson, 1980; Eph'al, 1982: 46-59, 142-169; Gerardi, 1987 and 1992; Kuhrt, 1995 (Chapter 9c); Waters, 1999 and 2000; and Novotny, 2008.

- Edition E<sub>1</sub>** of the annals;
- 665/4** **Edition E<sub>2</sub>** of the annals (not containing the following Egypt 2);
- c. 664-663** Second campaign in Egypt against rebellious Tandamane, successor of Taharqa; capture of Thebes (**Egypt 2**);
- 664** Military campaign against Elamite king Urtaki and the Gambulian Beliqiša, who had broken their treaty with Assyria and maneuvered in Babylonia, while the Assyrian troops were in Egypt; the Elamites were chased back to Elam; Urtaki and Beliqiša died the same year (**Elam 1**);
- Power struggles for the throne of Elam with the deposition of Urtaki's house and the flight of his sons and nephews to Nineveh; the throne was taken by Teumman (of Urtaki's extended family<sup>3</sup>);
- 662** Military campaign against Tyre followed by imposition of tribute (**Tyre**);
- 662-660** Mugallu, the king of Tabal, willingly acknowledged Assyrian supremacy and paid tribute (**Tabal**);
- Sandis, king of Cilicia, willingly acknowledged Assyria's supremacy and sent a daughter with dowry to Nineveh (**Cilicia**);
- Ashurbanipal recognized the son and heir of Iakinlu of Arwad as his vassal after the latter's death (**Arwad 2**);
- c. 660** Military campaign against the Mannaeans to recuperate border territories (**Mannaeans**);
- c. 658** Military campaign against the Medes who had thrown off the Assyrian yoke, with the conquest of some Median cities (**Medes**);
- c. 657** Capture and decapitation of governor Andaria of Urartu by Assyrian vassals for attacking cities subject to Assyria (**Urartu 1**);
- Gyges broke his allegiance to Assyria and supported Psammetichus I in his endeavor to unite Egypt out of Assyrian control (accomplished by 656 BC) (**Lydia 2**);



- 653** Military campaign against Elamite king Teumman and his decapitation (Til-Tuba battle on Ulai River, close to Susa); Urtaki's fugitive sons were enthroned by the Assyrians in two Elamite cities: Ummanigaš on the throne of Teumman (Madaktu and Susa) and Tammarithu I in Hidalu (**Elam 2**);
- Military campaign against Dunnanu, the Gambulian, for supporting the Elamite actions against Assyria; he was taken to Nineveh and slain (**Gambulu 2**);
- Rusa, king of Urartu, sent gifts to Ashurbanipal (**Urartu 2**);
- c. 652** Yauta, son of Hazael (Arab king of Qedar) attacked in southern Syria and Transjordan on Assyrian borders. Yauta was defeated and fled to seek refuge with Natnu of the Nabayyate tribes; Abiyate, son of Te'ri, went to Nineveh and obtained the Assyrian consent to replace Yauta; shortly after, he turned against Assyria; concomitantly, another Arab king, Ammuladi (also called king of Qedar), put pressure on the western Assyrian territories, but was defeated and captured by local Moabit king, Assyrian vassal, and sent to Nineveh (all episodes are noted as **Arabs 1**);
- 652 (through 648)** Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion against Assyria with the support of several allies (the **Babylonian rebellion**);<sup>443</sup> hostilities between Assyria and Babylonia; Šamaš-šumu-ukin assumed defensive position in the city of Babylon and Borsippa; Assyrians defeated the Babylonians and their Elamite supporters at Hirit;

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<sup>443</sup> Babylonia at this time was inhabited by several groups of populations with various political organization: the inhabitants of the old cities, centered around their great sanctuaries (subject to the king of Babylon), the Chaldean population, with its most prominent tribe, the Bit Yakin, located in the so-called Sealand (the territory around Ur and the marshy regions to its East), who lived in walled cities of their own, and the Aramean tribes, living in small settlements, near the Elamite border and beyond the Tigris. The political entities involved in Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion were several major cities of Babylonia (Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar and Nippur), the regions in southern Mesopotamia inhabited by Aramean population, including Gambulu, the Chaldeans (the Sealand), various factions from the Elamite royal milieu, and various kings of the Arabs. See Frame, 1992 and Khurt, 1997: 575.

- 652-647** Reconfigurations on the Elamite throne: the Assyrian interposed Ummanigaš (who soon supported Šamaš-šumu-ukin against Assyria) was slain by Tammaritu II (probably a member of the extended royal family of Ummanigaš and Tammaritu I); Tammaritu II was overthrown by his slave Indabibi and sought refuge with his family and supporters at Nineveh (after initially joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin's uprising); Indabibi was overthrown in an internal rebellion and replaced by Ummanaldas (**Elam 3**);
- 651** Insurrections in Assyria (of the officials) and Babylonia;
- 651-650** Šamaš-šumu-ukin's attack and capture of Cutha from Assyrian control;
- 650** Siege of Babylon by the Assyrians;
- Arab forces of Abiyate, son of Te'ri (previously established in leadership under Assyrian patronage), and Ouaité, son of Birdada (cousin of the former king Yauta, son of Hazael), joined Šamaš-šumu-ukin at Babylon, were defeated in the clash and retreated within the city; they managed to escape capture; Yauta, son of Hazael, the former Arab king, sought pardon in Nineveh, probably because Abiyate fell out of grace and in order to regain his throne, but was not forgiven and was killed (**Arabs 2**);
- 649** Famine in Babylonia;
- Edition B** of the annals (containing references to Šamaš-šumu-ukin, but not the Babylonian rebellion proper);
- 648** **Edition D** of the annals (similar to Edition B);
- Last document dated to Šamaš-šumu-ukin's reign – the year of his demise;
- Kandalanu (of uncertain identity) was set on the Babylonian throne to represent Assyria's interests (Ashurbanipal exercised direct control over Babylon);

647

**Edition C** of the annals (containing the Babylonian rebellion, but not Elam 4);

Military campaign against Elamite city Bit-imbi and king Ummanaldas; reinstallation of Tammaritu II at Susa (after he previously sought refuge at the court of Nineveh); soon Tammaritu II acted against Assyria again, but was deposed a second time in an inside rebellion and a second time he fled to Nineveh; in the process, the Assyrians captured and plundered several Elamite cities (**Elam 4**);

Ashurbanipal's letter to the Elders of Elam for the capture and extradition of Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate, active during the rebellion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin, under threat of consequences;

646

**Edition Kh** of the annals (containing Elam 4, but not the capture of Adija);

Capture of Adija, queen of the Arabs (**Arabs 3**);<sup>444</sup>

**Edition G** of the annals (containing Elam 4 and the capture of Adija);

Second military campaign against Elamite king Ummanaldas, probably for the capture of the Babylonian rebel Nabû-bel-šumate; capture and plunder of many royal cities and regions, with the severe destruction and looting of Susa; Ummanaldas escaped to the mountains, but soon returned to his royal seat; another Elamite king, Pa'e, who ruled in place of Ummanaldas, fled to Nineveh in submission (**Elam 5**);

Statue of the Akkadian goddess Nanaya was brought from looted Susa to Uruk;

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<sup>444</sup> Since this episode was introduced for the first time in Edition G, it is more likely that it happened shortly before this text was written and not in the course of Arab 1 campaign, as previously believed, an intervention which preceded the Babylonian rebellion and would have thus had many chances to be inserted in earlier editions of the annals. See Novotny, 2008: 133. Edition G calls her simply queen of Arabs, while Edition A mentions her being the wife of Yauta, son of Hazael.

- Beginning of work on the *bīt redûti* at Nineveh (the **North Palace**);  
work on the *akitu* temple of Ištar at Nineveh and on several other edifices;
- 645** **Prism T** and **Edition F** of the annals;
- 645/ 644** Military campaign against a hostile alliance of the Arab tribes led by Abiyate, son of Te’ri, Ouaite, son of Birdada and Natnu of the Nabaioth, who pressured on the region on middle Euphrates; Ouaite was captured and brought to Nineveh (forced into the victory procession in Assyria) (**Arabs 4**);
- 645** Suicide of the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate and the deferens of his corpse to the Assyrian king by Ummanaldas;
- Ummanaldas was captured and brought to Nineveh (**Elam 6**);
- 644/ 643** Death of Gyges of Lydia; Lydia overrun by the Cimmerians (led by Tugdammu); Gyges’ son submitted to the Assyrian king (**Lydia 3**);
- 643** Sarduri, king of Urartu, sent gifts to Ashurbanipal (**Urartu 3**);
- Edition A** of the annals;
- 641** Cyrus I, king of Parsumaš, sent embassy to Nineveh and his eldest son with gifts and homage, acknowledging Assyrian might after the devastation of Elam (**Cyrus**);
- Pislume, king of Hudimiri, sent gifts and acknowledged Assyrian might after the devastation of Elam (**Hudimiri**);
- 640** Unsuccessful attacks of Cimmerian Tugdammu against Assyria (**Tugdammu**);
- 639** **Edition H** of the annals (and probably also **Edition J** and the **Ishtar Temple inscription**);
- 30<sup>th</sup> year of Ashurbanipal’s reign;

**631/ 630**

Death of Ashurbanipal<sup>?</sup>; no document with his dating is recorded after 631.

## Appendix 2

### Military episodes in Ashurbanipal's editions of the annals<sup>445</sup>

#### 1. Editions E<sub>1</sub> (666 BC) and E<sub>2</sub> (665/4 BC)

The first annalistic editions recounted three political and military affairs, separated by a horizontal line. The first was a campaign in Egypt (**Egypt 1**), generated by the actions of Taharqa, king of Kush, against the Assyrian order installed by Esarhaddon. An account of Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt is provided, together with his appointment of loyal rulers and officials along with imposition of tribute. The troops of Ashurbanipal were sent to Egypt to fight off Taharqa; they were supported by Assyrian subject kings from Syria and the seacoast and by the local loyal forces (the kings set in position by Esarhaddon). Taharqa escaped, but the event is rendered in terms of his becoming overwhelmed by fear, losing his minds, abandoning his post and fleeing alone from Memphis to Thebes. All his troops and boats were captured and the officials previously appointed by Esarhaddon reinstalled. Later, these Assyrian appointed kings – Necho, Šarruludari and Paqruru – were intercepted by the Assyrian garrison planning to join forces with Taharqa, throw off the Assyrians from Egypt and split the territory among them. Only of the first two is said to have been caught and chained (nothing is mentioned of the third) and from these two, only Necho is mentioned to have been brought to Nineveh and pardoned (out of the king's good heart), with a harder treaty imposed upon him. There is no further account for the captured Šarruludari. Nothing more is mentioned about Taharqa either, most probably because at the time the text was composed, actions related to this affair were still in progress.

The second campaign was against Tandaja, the governor of the city of **Qirbit**,<sup>446</sup> justified by him not fearing the Assyrian might, not having previously been brought under the Assyrian yoke and having grown arrogant. This showed in his plundering in the region of Iamutbal, (East of the Tigris) where the population of Der<sup>447</sup> implored Ashurbanipal's help

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<sup>445</sup> According to Weissert and Onasch, 1992; Borger, 1996; Weissert, 1997; Novotny, 2005 and 2008.

<sup>446</sup> City in the mountains North of Der, perhaps in the piedmont area of Luristan. See Zadok, 1985:256 and [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/people/gods/places/#letter\\_Q](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/people/gods/places/#letter_Q) (accessed June 2015).

<sup>447</sup> Located at the border between Assyria and Elam, the city of Der played an important strategic role for Assyria (and Babylonia), the only route trade and armies could have taken towards Elam. The city had

and received it. Ashurbanipal sent his general from the border territory against him and Qirbit was defeated (with details of siege techniques of encircling, ditching and hits of the wall). Tandaja was killed, his herald captured and sent to Nineveh and the inhabitants deported to Egypt while other populations were brought there instead (suggesting that the Qirbit campaign preceded Egypt chronologically and was actually Ashurbanipal's first military action). Many other cities in the region were conquered and booty was carried off to Assyria.

An account of a royal lion hunt may have followed only in E<sub>1</sub>. It was conducted in the plane, as consequence of a pack of fierce lions attacking cattle pens; the lions were hunted down by a single team in the royal chariot and the king slew each lion with one arrow, piercing their throats. The hunt was followed by the celebration of the *akitu* festival of Ištar (New Year) in Arbela. In the other version (E<sub>2</sub>) this passage is omitted and the following episode comes directly after the Qirbit affair.

The last account was the arrival in Assyria of a herald of Gyges, king of Lydia, acknowledging Assyrian power and seeking an alliance against the Cimmerian attacks (**Lydia 1**). This episode is again rendered with some variations in E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub>. In the first, the herald is a rider (*rakbû*), whose language nobody in the Assyrian realm knew. In the second version, the bearer of the message is a more common *mar šipri* (messenger). While omitting the messenger's language being unintelligible, the second version introduces a new detail: the submission to Ashurbanipal was generated by a dream Gyges had, in which the god Assur revealed to him the solution against the Cimmerian danger – alliance with Ashurbanipal. This latter version of the story was taken up in the following editions.

## 2. Editions B (649 BC) and D (648 BC)

These two editions rendered an identical text concerning the military affairs. They were now arranged as eight *girrus*:

*Girru 1: Egypt 1* recounts the military intervention against Egypt and Kush, because Taharqa, king of Kush, tried to depose the officials installed in Egypt by Esarhaddon. The introductory account of Esarhaddon's order in Egypt is omitted. It only mentions that Taharqa moved in and ruled from Memphis, which Esarhaddon had previously made Assyrian possession. Ashurbanipal marched to Egypt to support the Assyrian appointed kings

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constantly changed hands in the Neo-Assyrian times. For a discussion on Der and its important role for Ashurbanipal, see Frahme, 2009.

and officials. The encounter is treated as an Assyrian victory, although Taharqa escaped to Thebes: Taharqa lost his mind, overwhelmed by the divinely endowed radiance of the Assyrian king. Memphis was captured and the Assyrian order was reinstalled and maintained by a strengthened garrison. More details appear in this account; those cities supporting Taharqa were plundered (Sais and Tanis), the inhabitants slaughtered and their skins hung on the city walls. Šarruludari was caught and brought to Assyria, with no mention of his conspiring to a rebellion with other kings (he simply plotted evil in his heart), and Taharqa, whose fate remained unknown in Edition E, is now said to have died in his place of refuge, overwhelmed by the terror of Assur's weapons. On Taharqa's throne came his nephew Tandamane (Tanutamon) who continued the anti-Assyrian policy and besieged the Assyrian garrison in Memphis. Necho and Paqruru were never mentioned in this edition.<sup>448</sup> Thus, Edition B, written when Taharqa was already dead, rendered the Assyrian victory in stronger terms than Edition E (the king's radiance making Taharqa go mad, horrid details of the punishment of rebel cities); however, no account of a later conspiracy and its effects is mentioned.

*Girru 2: Egypt 2* recounts the return of the Assyrian army to Egypt to fight off Tandamane, with the full support of the officials and kings installed there by the Assyrians. Tandamane fled from Memphis to Thebes and then to Kipkipi, suggesting thus that Memphis was lost in the meantime, although nothing is said about this event. Thebes was defeated, heavily plundered and its inhabitants carried away; the Assyrian army returned to Nineveh. Nothing is said about Tandamane, thus suggesting he was not captured. This is silenced and solved in the royal rhetoric through placing the emphasis on the bitter war visited upon Egypt and the rich spoils taken to Nineveh. In both Egyptian campaigns of Edition B (and D) Ashurbanipal recounts in first person his direct participation in all actions, even if in the

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<sup>448</sup> P. Gerardi suggests that this may have been so either because in the meantime the political relationships with Necho were in terms of an alliance and he could not be portrayed as a former enemy left unpunished, or because of the restrictions imposed by the abbreviated version in Edition B. Gerardi, 1987: 38. The latter seems to be more likely; as it is apparent in the text edited by Borger, Necho was explicitly pardoned for his conspiring attempt already in Edition E, written closer to these events, showing that there was no danger in rendering a present ally as a former enemy to whoever was meant to be the audience of Edition E. See Borger, 1996: 211f (§11). Moreover, by the time Edition B was written (649 BC), Egypt was no longer under Assyrian control, since already by 656 Psammetichus I of the XXVI Dynasty had united Egypt under his rulership and it would have made no difference for the Assyrian-Egyptian relationship how one or another past rulers of Egypt was portrayed. For Psammetichus I's unification of Egypt, see Kuhrt, 1997: 500 and Chapter 12b.



previous Edition E the text explicitly mentioned his troops being sent to Egypt and the garrison conducting the affairs (“to support my loyal servants in Egypt I marched swiftly”, “the people who had joined Taharqa I captured”, “their skins I staked”, “their cities I destroyed”, “with full hand I returned in safety to Nineveh” etc.).

*Girru 3*: contains five interventions in the Anatolian and the seacoast regions: a military campaign against **Tyre**, because its king, Ba'al, did not pay heed to Assyrian command. The city was isolated from water and food supplies and submitted: the blockage was lifted and tribute was imposed. Here too the action is presented as if the king actively took part in it. The following three episodes implied willing submission – **Arwad 1**<sup>449</sup> (king Jakinlu), **Tabal**<sup>450</sup> (king Mugallu), **Cilicia**<sup>451</sup> (king Sandis). Another episode concerning Arwad, **Arwad 2**, recounted about king Jakinlu's son and heir being recognized by Ashurbanipal and two other sons being given gifts and kept at Nineveh. The **Lydia 1** affair is the same as in the E<sub>2</sub> Edition (concerning the alliance request of Gyges).

*Girru 4*: **Qirbit** renders a shortened version of the episode in Editions E, keeping the punishment for the plundering in Iamutbal, but omitting the complaint of the citizens of Der and the list of conquered cities in the region. In contrast to Editions E, where the text explicitly mentions Ashurbanipal sending his general against Qirbit, Edition B has the text in first person actively involving the king in the whole action (“I marched against”, “I destroyed and plundered the city”, “I captured the mayor”, “I deported the inhabitants”).

*Girru 5*: treats actions against **Mannaeans**,<sup>452</sup> **Medes** and **Urartu 1**<sup>453</sup>. The first campaign was conducted against the Mannean king Ahšeri, justified by him not obeying to Assyrian command (suggesting he was previously vassal to Assyria) and always answering in a tricky

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<sup>449</sup> City on the Mediterranean sea coast. See [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter\\_A](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter_A) (with map) (June 2015).

<sup>450</sup> Tabal was a kingdom in Anatolia. See [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter\\_T](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter_T) (with map) (June 2015).

<sup>451</sup> Assyrian “Que”. It was located in the southeastern coast of Turkey, bordered by Taurus and Amanus. See [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter\\_C](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter_C) (with map) (June 2015).

<sup>452</sup> In northwestern Iran, South and East of Lake Urmia, on the eastern slopes of the Zagros Mountains. Zadok, 1985: 219-220 (Mannaja) and [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter\\_M](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter_M) (June, 2015).

<sup>453</sup> Kingdom North of Assyria, between Lakes Van, Urmia and Sevan (with capital Tušpa). See [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter\\_U](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/peoplegodspplaces/#letter_U) (with map) (June 2015).

manner. The real purpose becomes readily apparent: to take back border cities previously under Assyrian rule, fallen under Mannaeen control during Ashurbanipal's predecessors. A first cunning attack at night took place against the Assyrian camp, but the enemy was badly defeated and the fields filled with their corpses. Various regions and cities in Mannaeen territory were conquered, plundered and burned down. The commander of one region, Rajadišade, was killed. Ahšeri himself eluded capture, but was delivered by the great Assyrian gods into the hands of his own rebellious people and killed. His successors submitted and were made to pay tribute once again to Assyria. Two very short accounts follow – against several Median chieftains who had thrown off the Assyrian yoke,<sup>454</sup> who were defeated, captured (“with my own hands”) and brought to Nineveh, and against governor Andaria from Urartu who tried to take hold of Assyrian subject territory. The inhabitants of the area fought them back, killed Andaria and sent his head to Nineveh. Except for the latter exploit, in all the other actions the king is portrayed as participating directly.

*Girru* 6: recounts the **Elam 1** campaign against Urtaki,<sup>455</sup> king of Elam, justified by his not considering the friendly treatment he always received from the Assyrian king. The beginning recounts times of drought and famine in Elam when much help came from Assyria. The king expresses his awe to an attack coming from Urtaki<sup>456</sup> and proceeds to justify Urtaki's behavior. More hesitation in giving credit to the news of the attack is expressed. Contrary to any enemy of Assyria, Urtaki's betrayal is minimized, insisting on his being influenced and succumbing to the lies of the Gambulian king Beliqiša,<sup>457</sup> the governor of Nippur Nabû-šumu-ereš (both vassals of Ashurbanipal) and an Elamite general of Urtaki to break his alliance with Assyria and attack in southern Babylonia. While the attackers were

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<sup>454</sup> Esarhaddon had imposed treaties on several Median chieftains already in 672 BC, triggered probably by invasions of Cimmerians and Scythians in the Zagros. Waters, 2000: 42. For the Assyrian treaties, see Parpola and Watanabe, 1988.

<sup>455</sup> See Urtaki (675-664<sup>?</sup>) in Waters, 2000: 42-47.

<sup>456</sup> A peaceful relationship with Urtaki and Elam was inherited from Esarhaddon; letters dating to the time of the latter suggest a relationship of equality between the two kings, with references to oaths and treaties. Watters, 2000: 43-44. An early inscription of Ashurbanipal – the L<sub>4</sub> text – particularizes an unnamed Elamite king having sent his greetings on Ashurbanipal's accession, in a context of general description of peace and perfect order in the four corners of the world. See Streck, 1926: 2262-263, col ii 24 and Luckenbill, 1927: 381 (1987).

<sup>457</sup> Gambulu was an Aramean tribe in southeastern Babylonia, at the border with Elam. See Zadok, 1985: 137. Apparently, during Esarhaddon and under the leadership of Beliqiša, Gambulu too entertained peaceful relationships with Assyria, as suggested by the royal correspondence (ABL 541). But come the opportunity, the Gambulu would constantly supported anti-Assyrian Elamite actions. See Gerardi, 1987: 131 (and fn 31).

chased back to Elam, their fates, described in detail, are put on the account of the gods, introducing also the sins they became guilty of.<sup>458</sup> Rather than suggesting that they were never captured by the Assyrians, the formulation alludes to the curses contained by the loyalty treaties, should the oath taker break it, which is exactly what the attackers were held guilty of. Moreover, the text continues, the hearts of the gods were still not appeased, having Urtaki's house being dethroned by Teumman, described as the "in the likeness of a galla-demon".<sup>459</sup> The sons of Urtaki (Ummanigaš, Ummanappa and Tammaritu) and the sons of Urtaki's brother and predecessor Ummanaldaš I (Kudurru and Paru) together with 60 members of the royal family, countless archers and simple citizens fled to Nineveh seeking refuge from Teumman. Throughout the whole military action, the king is rendered as taking active part.

*Girru 7: Elam 2* was conducted against Teumman<sup>460</sup> who asked for the extradition of the fugitive royal family, establishing thus a direct connection with the previous *girru*. The request, which came with insolent messages through the heralds Umbadara and Nabû-damiq, was denied. His evil plans were met with evil omens from the gods, foretelling his downfall (an eclipse). Teumman became sick (with some physical changes regarding his mouth and eyes)<sup>461</sup> but still proceeded to muster his armies. The news reached Ashurbanipal during religious festivities in Arbela for the goddess Ištar. Further omens came from the goddess (a dream), that she would take charge of the battle against Teumman, while Ashurbanipal should proceed with the festivities in Arbela. The text moves on with Ashurbanipal entering Elam through Der (at the border), while Teumman was in the city of Bit-Imbi and the latter's flight to Susa. However, he had to pay the people of his land with silver and gold in order to save his soul. Ashurbanipal charged on a special date, with religious implications (Elul, month of the work of the Ištar and of Assur celebration). The final encounter of the two armies took place on the Ulai River, at Til Tuba, close to Susa. The dead bodies of the enemy blocked the river and filled the land up to Susa. At the command of Assur and Marduk, Ashurbanipal cut off the head of Teumman in front of his troops. Elam submitted to the

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<sup>458</sup> Urtaki, who did not keep his friendship, died before his time during the same year (of the defeat), Beliqiša, who threw off the Assyrian yoke, died from a rat bite, the governor of Nippur, who broke his oath, fell ill with dropsy and the Elamite general, who corrupted Urtaki, died the same year (of untold causes).

<sup>459</sup> Borger, 1996: 97, 223 (B§30: IV 74).

<sup>460</sup> On Teumman (664<sup>?</sup>-653 BC), see Waters, 1999 and 2000: 47-55.

<sup>461</sup> Such an account about Elamite kings suffering from illnesses is not singular in the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions. See Gerardi, 1987: 146.

Assyrian yoke. The end recounts the aftermath of the campaign – Ummanigaš and Tammaritu, two sons of Urtaki, are brought along and placed on two Elamite thrones, the first on Teumman's throne (without more specification), and the other in Hidalu.<sup>462</sup> The recounting of the battle against Teumman is ambiguous, part of it saying Ashurbanipal would not take part in it, as he was in Arbela in celebration of the goddess Ištar, while part of it renders the battle in 1<sup>st</sup> person, with the king as main protagonist.<sup>463</sup>

*Girru* 8 contains several episodes: **Gambulu, Elam 3** (with references to the Babylonian rebellion), and **Arabs 1**. It starts with the march against Dunanau, king of the Gambulu (Aramean tribes in Southern Babylonia), son of Beliqiša (the latter had previously instigated Urtaki to break his treaty with Assyria), because he supported the Elamites and cast off the Assyrian yoke. It too is thus connected to the previous two campaigns (Urtaki and Teumman), rendering the action as a continuum, with causes and effects. Dunanu's stronghold, Šapibel, was defeated, he and his entire family were captured and his treasures, musicians, officials and specialists of all kinds were taken away. People from all over the land were marched away as captives. Massira, the chief bowman of Teumman, who lived in Dunanu's palace at Šapibel, was also captured from there. He was decapitated in the presence of Dunanu. The city was completely devastated and flooded as to silence any human voice. The chopped off head of Teumman was hanged to Dunanu's neck. Only now does the text mention the return of the troops back to Nineveh (not after the previous *girru*). At Nineveh, a series of punishments are described in detail. Umbadara and Nabû-Damiq, Teumman's heralds mentioned previously in Elam 2 were confronted with the sight of their lord's head and went mad (one committed suicide, the other tore out his beard). Teumman's head was displayed at the city gate as to show the people the might of the great gods. A grandson of Merodach-baladan,<sup>464</sup> Aplaya, was captured by Ummanigaš of Elam (Ashurbanipal's

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<sup>462</sup> Hidalu was an Elamite royal city in the mountainous region. Although the relationship between the two kings is not known, this arrangement suggest that Elam was no longer a single political entity and more so, it was at least for this time, under Assyrian control. For the political structure of Elam, see Waters, 2000: 106f.

<sup>463</sup> This may suggest different sources of information used in the elaboration of Edition B or an inconsistency due to scribal error.

<sup>464</sup> Merodach-baladan II (Mardik-apla- iddina) was a leading figure of the Bit-Yakin tribe (Chaldeans from the Sealand, the marshy lands of southern Mesopotamia), who acceded to the throne of Babylon and conducted anti-Assyrian actions during Sargon II and Sennacherib, mostly with the support of Elam, which the Sealand bordered. He managed to escape capture in all confrontations. See Frame, 1992: 42 and Kuhrt, 1997: 580.

appointee on the Elamite throne) and sent to Nineveh.<sup>465</sup> Dunanu and his brother Samgunu were taken further to Assur and Arbela. Two magnates of Dunanu, Mannukiahhe and Nabûusalli, who offended the gods, had their tongues cut off and were eventually flayed in Arbela. Dunanu himself was in the end killed at Nineveh on a skinning table, like a lamb. The rest of his brothers and the Chaldean Aplaya were also killed, their flesh being carried throughout the land to be seen, probably as deterrence for any further anti-Assyrian actions. The sons of Nabû-šumu-ereš, the governor of Nippur who instigated the Elamite king Urtaki to attack in Babylonia, were forced to grind the bones of their father, brought to Assyria from Gambulu, in front of the gate of Nineveh.

The next sequence, separated by a horizontal line, treats the **Elam 3** affair, with an account of the many changes on the Elamite throne. It starts with Ummanigaš,<sup>466</sup> previously installed by the Assyrians on the Elamite throne of Teumman. He did not respect the treaty with Assyria. In exchange for bribes from Ashurbanipal's brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin, king of Babylon, he secretly assembled an Elamite army to fight against the Assyrians who were battling in Babylonia at the time. No account is given of the Šamaš-šumu-ukin rebellion proper, as the text was concerned only with its Elamite support. Ummanigaš involved several Elamite figures in this matter: Undasu, a son of Teumman,<sup>467</sup> Zazaz the mayor of Pillatu, Paru, the mayor of Hilmu,<sup>468</sup> Attametu the chief commander of the archers, and Nešu, the commander of the Elamite troops. Ummanigaš incited Undasu to avenge his decapitated and humiliated father by fighting the Assyrians in Babylonia. The secrecy of his actions emphasized Ummanigaš' breaking his treaty with Ashurbanipal, in line with his fate described further. Undasu, Zazaz and Attametu were defeated at a place called Mangisu (in the Dyala region), were decapitated and their heads sent to Ashurbanipal (nothing is said of Nešu). To ask for the reason of these events, Ashurbanipal sent a messenger to Ummanigaš,

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<sup>465</sup> No further context is given for Aplaya besides his grandfather Merodach-baladan having caused trouble for Ashurbanipal's forefathers. The following mention of Dunanu and his brother is set in a similar context, that is, they are the sons of Beliqiša, who caused trouble to his predecessors, as Dunanu caused for Ashurbanipal's reign.

<sup>466</sup> See Huban-Nikaš II (653-652<sup>7</sup> BC) in Waters, 2000: 56-61.

<sup>467</sup> This is curious, given the fact that earlier in this same edition, Teumman was the one who dethroned Ummanigaš and forced him to flee to Nineveh after Urtaki's death, insisting for his extradition and planning to kill all of Urtaki's family.

<sup>468</sup> Pillatu and Hilmu are two cities on the Elamite-Babylonian border, an area apparently inhabited by the Gambulu tribes. See Zadok, 1985: 160, 249 and Gerardi, 1987: 186.

who was detained. The gods decided in favor of Ashurbanipal and against Ummanigaš: Tammaritu (II),<sup>469</sup> a member of the extended Elamite royal family, rose against Ummanigaš and killed him and his entire family. The demise of Ummanigaš alludes to the curses at the end of the treaties imposed by the Assyrians on their subjects, which invoke the death of the traitor and his seed at the hands of the gods who witnessed the oath. Tammaritu II, more wicked than Ummanigaš, like the latter, accepted bribery and supported Šamaš-šumu-ukin with troops against Assyria. The great gods had it that he was overthrown by his servants in a rebellion started by Indabibi,<sup>470</sup> who sat himself on the throne (the rebels are said to have fought and killed each other, emphasizing the dramatic fragmentation in the interests of the Elamite elites). Tammaritu II, said to have previously spoken badly about the decapitation of Teumman by a simple Assyrian soldier, fled by boat to Nineveh together with his family and 85 nobles (naked and crawling). They are said to have been accompanied by a certain Marduk-šarrusur, Ashurbanipal's general, whom they had previously kidnapped. It is the first time the name of an Assyrian general is actually introduced in the royal accounts, although the context is not made more explicit. Tammaritu pled for his acceptance in Ashurbanipal's alliance. It is said that for one single general the gods would repay Ashurbanipal greatly. Tammaritu and his people were let to stay in Ashurbanipal's palace and serve him.<sup>471</sup> As for Indabibi, he acknowledged Assyrian might and freed Assyrian soldiers imprisoned and sent to Elam by the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate,<sup>472</sup> in the hope that together with his herald, they would speak in good terms of him to Ashurbanipal and avoid further attack on Elam.

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<sup>469</sup> This Tammaritu II (652<sup>?</sup>-649<sup>?</sup> BC) was another figure from the royal extended family of Ummanigaš and Tammaritu I, perhaps a nephew of theirs. See Waters, 2000: 62-64.

<sup>470</sup> See Indabibi (649<sup>?</sup>-648<sup>?</sup> BC) in Waters, 2000: 64-67.

<sup>471</sup> It can be seen that the text of the edition uses special patterns for different figures, according to their relationship with Assyria. Ummanigaš had sworn an oath to the Assyrian king and broke it by helping Šamaš-šumu-ukin; his punishment was thus constructed in the same terms as the curses contained in such treaties. Tammaritu II had no agreement with Assyria; his same conduct (helping Šamaš-šumu-ukin) and him being even more wicked than his predecessor brought him a different fate – while still being deposed, he kept his life and took the road to Nineveh.

<sup>472</sup> Nabû-bel-šumate was another grandson of Merodach-baladan (see note 34 above) and leading figure of the Chaldeans in the Sealand (the marshy lands of southern Mesopotamia). His correspondence with Ashurbanipal shows him informing the king about movements in Elam and southern Babylonia. He later became an important figure in the rebellion against Assyria and ally of Šamaš-šumu-ukin. As suggested by a letter (ABL 839), the situation in the Sealand may have not been peaceful and it may have been in these conditions that Nabû-bel-šumate required Assyrian soldiers, which he later, maybe when the Babylonian rebellion started, imprisoned and

Separated from the previous affair by another line, the text deals next with the victory over the Arabs (**Arabs 1**).<sup>473</sup> It starts by setting the premises: Yauta, son of Hazael, the king of Qedar and vassal of Assyria, asked for the Arab gods to be sent back to their sanctuaries (most certainly previously taken off by Esarhaddon). They were returned by Ashurbanipal in exchange for an oath of allegiance. But the Arab king broke his oath and stopped sending gifts (tribute), incited the Arabs to rebellion and continuously plundered Assyrian territories in the West. Ashurbanipal sent his troops stationed in the area against him. They defeated Yauta and the rebellious Arabs, set their tents on fire and took much booty. Those who escaped the slaughter were faced with pestilence and famine – the curses of the oath they broke. Yauta, though, managed to flee. The detailed account of the booty, its considerable size and its effects in Assyria, minimizes the rebellious leader's escape (he fled alone, the text insists). A certain Abiyate, son of Te'ri, received Yauta's kingship, after he submitted and swore an allegiance oath with imposition of tribute. Another Qedarite king, Ammuladi, who also plundered in the West at the same time with Yauta, was captured by the Moabit king, subject of Ashurbanipal, and sent to Nineveh. Natnu, the king of the Nabayyate tribes willingly acknowledged the Assyrian might in exchange for a treaty of good relations with imposition of tribute.

**3. Edition C (647 BC).** The text takes over Edition B, but adds extra details in *girru* 1 and 8 and introduces a new military encounter in the latter – the **Babylonian rebellion**.<sup>474</sup> Only the modifications are recorded in the following description:

*Girru* 1, in comparison to Edition B, the **Egypt 1** campaign adds a long list of kings (in the Syrian and seacoast regions), among which Tyre and Arwad, who acknowledged the Assyrian might and had their troops and ships join Ashurbanipal in fighting off Taharqa in

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sent to Elam. See Frame, 1992; 127-129 and 175-182. After the Babylonian rebellion was quelled, he fled to Elam from where he continued his anti-Assyrian actions, probably in the hope that, once Šamaš-šumu-ukin was dead, he could claim the Babylonian throne for himself. He was, after all, the grandson of Merodach-baladan II, former king of Babylon during Sennacherib. See Nabû-bel-šumate's letters in Waterman, 1930, II: 79-85 (ABL 832-839). See a letter of warning for Ashurbanipal concerning Nabû-bel-šumate's questionable loyalty at p. 191-193 (ABL 998).

<sup>473</sup> For the disambiguation of the Arab encounters in Ashurbanipal's annals and their chronological occurrence, see Eph'al, 1982: 142-169. However, Novotny's later study on Edition G of the annals changes an aspect – Adija, queen of the Arabs, was caught after and not previous to the Babylonian rebellion. Novotny, 2008: 133.

<sup>474</sup> For the development of the Babylonian rebellion, see Frame, 1992 (Chapter 8).

Egypt.<sup>475</sup> It also adds a list of the kings loyal to Assyria who were reinstalled in their functions after Taharqa's defeat and recapture of Memphis, among which Necho (of Memphis and Sais), Šarrulundari (of Pelusium) and Paqruru (of Pišaptu). The plotting scheme is reintroduced (similar to Edition E), as these three kings break their oath and plan to join forces with Taharqa to drive the Assyrians out of Egypt. Like in Edition E, they were intercepted by the Assyrian garrison. Similar to edition B, their cities were destroyed, their inhabitants flayed and exposed on the city walls. Unlike in Edition B, however, the action is attributed to the Assyrian garrison (and an unnamed general), not to the king himself. Necho and Šarruludari were caught and sent to Nineveh. Šarruludari's fate is now introduced for the first time – he was thrown in prison. Like in Edition E, Necho is pardoned. But he is now given precious garments and rings, a sword with Ashurbanipal's name and a royal chariot with horses and donkeys before being sent back to Sais with Assyrian generals for support. He was endowed with more riches than Esarhaddon had done before; his son too was installed as king in a city. The rest of the Egyptian account is identical to Edition B.

*Girru* 8: the affairs treated here are **Gambulu**, **Elam 3**, the **Babylonian rebellion** and **Arabs 1**. **Elam 3** (Ummanigaš, Tammarišu II and Indabibi affair) was now reconsidered within the development of the Babylonian matter. First, the Gambulu episode introduces a new detail in the punishment section: while Dunanu is made to carry around his neck the head of Teumman, his brother Samgunu is made to wear the head of a certain Išarnandi, never mentioned before in the inscription, and without any further context. This character is called king of Hidalu (Elamite region) in the entries of some of the epigraph lists. One epigraph apparently describes an image – an official of Hidalu carried the chopped off head of this Išarnandi, while another Hidalu official is depicted nearby. They both are said to have slain their own magnates, fearful of Ashurbanipal, and to have presented them as gifts when submitting to him.<sup>476</sup> Išarnandi then seems to have functioned either as concurrent to

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<sup>475</sup> Borger, 1996: 18-20, 212 (C§14).

<sup>476</sup> See text in Russell, 1999: 158 (Text A, 3) and Borger, 1996: 299-300 (3 I 6-11). Variations of this epigraph appear in two other lists, for which see Russell, 1999: 158, 3v (Texts B and C) and Borger, 1996: 306 (B10-11/C4-8). Another entry in the epigraph list (Text A) may have rendered the account in Edition C, if correctly restored (although much is missing). See reconstructed text in Russell, 1999: 162 (Text A, 25); see the much fragmentary original text in Borger, 1996: 303 (25 II 47-49). A scene in Room 33 in the Southwest Palace (slab 5, upper register) shows two figures with heads attached to their neck. See image in Russell, 1999: 181 (Fig. 66).



Teumman from the region of Hidalu, or after his death.<sup>477</sup> Tammaritu, the brother of Ummanigaš, it must be remembered, was installed on the throne of Hidalu by the Assyrians at the end of Elam 2 campaign. Secondly, it introduces a new episode concerning Rusa, king of Urartu (**Urartu 1**), who willingly submitted to the Assyrian king and sent gifts and messengers, at the time Dunanu the Gambulean was captured (thus at the end of **Gambulu** episode).<sup>478</sup> A connection is created with the previous campaigns, as the Urartian delegation is presented the insolent Elamite messengers of Teumman detained at Nineveh (Nabû-damiq and Umbadara).<sup>479</sup> Next, the text introduces briefly Šamaš-šumu-ukin at the beginning of **Elam 3**, in the terms of “the faithless brother”, whom Ashurbanipal had set on the throne of Babylon, but who had ceased friendship and closed the gates of the city. Šamaš-šumu-ukin had turned Ummanigaš (placed on the throne of Elam by Ashurbanipal) from a vassal to an enemy of the Assyrian king and took the possessions of the temple Ezida to Elam. Ummanigaš proceeded then to secretly raise an Elamite army against the Assyrian troops fighting in Babylonia, in the same wording as Edition B. The account of Tammaritu’s takeover of the Elamite throne, his supporting Šamaš-šumu-ukin, his deposition by Indabibi and his flight to Assyria is identical to Edition B, but adds a further passage with emphasis on the Elamite bowmen of Tammaritu, now part of the Assyrian household. The text proceeds with a detailed and long account of the famine and pestilence brought upon the inhabitants of Akkad, with a suggestive mentioning of their walking around dressed in sacks like sinners, emphasizing their breaking the treaties and making Ashurbanipal a tool of the gods who witnessed the sworn oaths. Šamaš-šumu-ukin threw himself into the fire, a death ascribed to him by the god Assur. All the goods of his palace, his family, soldiers, officials and royal insignia were taken to Assyria together with the population who survived the famine. The text goes back to Indabibi of Elam, who, at this point, recognized the Assyrian might and, like in Edition B, freed the Assyrian troops imprisoned by Nabû-bel-šumate in Elam, in order to avoid an Assyrian attack. However, Edition C then introduces a further confusing account concerning this episode. It mentions again Nabû-bel-šumate, the son of Merodach-baladan,

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<sup>477</sup> Borger, 1996: 105, 227 (C§46, VII 49). Išarnandi may be the Elamite Šutruk/ Šutur-Nahhunte. See discussion in Waters, 2000: 54.

<sup>478</sup> Borger, 1996: 107, 228 (C§51).

<sup>479</sup> Although some paragraphs earlier they were said to have lost their minds at the site of Teumman’s head, with Umbadara tearing off his beard and Nabû-damiq stabbing himself. It may be that the latter did not die, or that there is an inconsistency in the text, due to the scribe’s use of different sources and his building on the previous Edition B.

deceivingly having detained the Assyrian troops sent to him for support (and whom he apparently imprisoned in Elam). In this context, Ashurbanipal demanded from Indabibi through the latter's herald the return of the Assyrian soldiers under the threat of war and a fate like Teumman's.<sup>480</sup> The rumors of the threat spread in Elam before the herald reached Indabibi. Apparently, at the same time, Ashurbanipal sent his own messenger to Der, at the border with Elam, most probably equivalent to a signal of attack. Fear of an attack incited people to rebel against Indabibi and kill him. Ummanaldas, son of Attametum, took the throne of Elam. The fate of Indabibi is put on the account of the gods who acted to bring the enemies under Ashurbanipal's sway. As it seems, while the material of the previous Edition B is taken verbatim, with a favorable picture for Indabibi, the new material with the fate of the Elamite king is not consistent with it. It may be that relationships between Assyria and Indabibi changed in the meantime and this was reflected in Edition C, without a too critical editing of the information taken from the previous Edition B. The Arabian wars follow next (the first part is lost), with a similar rendering to Edition B, except that now it specifies where Yauta fled during the Assyrian attack – to Nabayyate territory. The commemorated building work is fragmentarily preserved, but it may have been a part of the arsenal palace in Nineveh.<sup>481</sup>

#### 4. Edition Kh (646 BC)

The text is too fragmentary to reconstruct the exact number of *girrus*. The edition brings several more details in already known campaigns. The **Elam 3** affair elaborates on Tammaritu II's deposition by Indabibi. He insulted the Assyrian gods when reproaching Teumman's decapitation in his own country and in front of his troops by a low ranking Assyrian soldier.<sup>482</sup> He also criticized Ummanigaš' kissing the feet of the Assyrian general who installed him on the Elamite throne. In other words, he rebuked Assyrian intervention into Elamite internal affairs and direct implication in the changes on the throne, as Elam was an independent state. For such insolence, the gods decided his downfall and he too (like

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<sup>480</sup> Although the previous passage said Indabibi freed the troops so that they would speak in good terms about the Elamite king together with the Elamite herald. A herald of Indabibi being already in front of Ashurbanipal and receiving his messages suggests that the Assyrian soldiers made it home, making the request of Ashurbanipal confusing.

<sup>481</sup> “[e]-[nu-ma é-ga]l”. Borger, 1996: 164 (C§86, X 107).

<sup>482</sup> Although, starting with Edition B, the Elam 2 campaign itself is rendered as if the king actively took part in the battle and decapitated Teumman.

Ummanigaš, whom he had criticized and ultimately murdered) had to take the road to Nineveh and became Ashurbanipal's servant in the palace.

Prism Kh introduces for the first time a further campaign – **Elam 4**,<sup>483</sup> positioned before the Arabian affair. The account is introduced as a new *girru*, but the number is unknown.<sup>484</sup> The beginning is extremely fragmentary. Between lacunas, the text mentions Šamaš-šumu-ukin, someone being hit by an arrow, but without dying, and fleeing to Elam.<sup>485</sup> The person's son, Barburu, was caught by the Assyrian king in Bit-imbi<sup>486</sup> (an Elamite royal city with an important defensive role) and flayed. Tammарitu (II) is also mentioned in a fragmentary passage. He is said to have fled from Assyria to Elam,<sup>487</sup> but got to know about Ashurbanipal's war. A chariot and its overturn are next legible. Whatever the issue, it must have been connected to the Babylonian rebellion and its aftermath. The main character fled to Elam, triggering an Assyrian incursion in Elamite territory, with the conquest of the stronghold Bit-Imbi and the capture and execution of the fugitive's son (but not the fugitive himself). Apparently, Tammарitu II betrayed Assyria and returned to Elam, but to no good fortune. Nothing is known where he might have actually fled. When the text resumes, Ummanaldas, the king of Elam, learned about the march of the Assyrian troops and fled from Madaktu,<sup>488</sup> his city of residence, to the mountains. Again nothing transpires about what relationship Tammарitu II and Ummanaldas would have had considering that the former went

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<sup>483</sup> Elam 4 is called for reasons of convenience the first campaign against Ummanaldas. However, as it will become clear, in the report of Edition Kh, Ummanaldas does not seem to be the main target. For Ummanaldas as Elamite Huban-Haltaš III (648<sup>?</sup>-645<sup>?</sup>), see Waters, 2000: 68.

<sup>484</sup> Borger, 1996: 159-163, 236-237.

<sup>485</sup> A rumor that Šamaš-šumu-ukin may flee to Elam circulated at the time (in 651 BC), as shown by a query to Šamaš, a rumor which met with a negative answer from the god. See query 282 in Starr, 1990: 265-266. The following events suggest that not Šamaš-šumu-ukin was the character referred to in Edition Kh as fleeing to Elam, but the identity remains unknown. There is evidence that such queries were kept as archival copies (with two inquiries on the same tablet), suggesting they may have been consulted and used later for the composition of various texts (although in this case it would have meant contradicting the answer of the query report).

<sup>486</sup> Bit-imbi was a fortified border city between Elam and Assyria, close to the city of Der. See Gerardi, 1988: 186.

<sup>487</sup> Borger, 1996: 159 (C§69, IX 13-15).

<sup>488</sup> Madaktu, located in the mountainous regions of Elam, was indicated by the Assyrian sources as the city of residence for many Elamite kings in the 7th century. When the situation would get tensed, they fled to another royal city, Hidalu, also in the mountainous regions. However, Teumman, fled not to Hidalu, but to Susa in Edition B, where he had to pay in order to get the city's support. Waters, 2000: 32.

back to Elam and he had previously been dethroned by Ummanaldas himself. A certain Umbahabua, who resided in the city of Bubilu (in Susiana) and seized the throne of Ummanaldas after the latter's flight, is said to have fled from his city into the deep of the water, without further context (a stock expression of the annals for the flight of a king before the Assyrian might).<sup>489</sup> On return, the text continues, Ashurbanipal seized 25 Elamite cities, among them Hamanu, Madaktu, Susa and Bubilu. Their inhabitants, military equipment, animals and wagons were taken to Assyria. A curious passage follows – some Elamites of unspecified location, to whom Sennacherib had cut their lips in battle and crippled their faces, were captured, taken to Assyria and flayed.<sup>490</sup> This suggests a certain state of brittle affairs with certain Elamite figures ever since the time of Sennacherib. Next, the inhabitants of several cities from southern Babylonia (including Uruk and Nippur) were taken to Assyria together with the spoil from Elam, apparently because of their orientation towards Elam. It is not clear if they were fugitives to Elam or if a military effort in southern Babylonia also took place at the time of this incursion in Elam. They were investigated and slain in Assyria according to their crimes. The spoils and captives from Elam, obtained through the support of the gods, were distributed in Assyria: part of them to the gods, the soldiers were added to the Assyrian troops and the rest were given to Assyrian dignitaries. Thus, **Elam 4** campaign did not explicitly target Ummanaldas, but had a wider aim, including the capture of a Babylonian fugitive hiding in Bit-imbi and people from southern Babylonia. While the

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<sup>489</sup> For Umbahabua (Uban-habua), see Waters, 2000: 71.

<sup>490</sup> Sennacherib's campaigns against Elam were always in connection to Babylonian rebellions in which Elam functioned as ally and place of refuge for Chaldean rebels (Merodach-Baladan II, who sat himself on the Babylonian throne, and a Chaldean leader called Mušešib-Marduk). His 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and a later campaign were all conducted against Babylonia and Elam. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> campaigns (in his 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> regnal years) he marched against Chaldean exiles in Elamite territory and those who granted them asylum. While the Assyrians were busy in Elam, the Elamites attacked in Babylonia and captured Sennacherib's son Assur-nadin-šumi positioned on the throne of Babylon. He was never seen again. The retaliation came during the 8<sup>th</sup> campaign in the following year, at Halule. The inscriptions recounting this encounter say Sennacherib captured his enemies during the battle, killed them and "cut off their lips and thus destroyed their pride" and their hands. See, for example, Grayson and Novotny, 2012: Inscription 18: 154-155 (vi 1-3) or Inscription 22: 183 (vi 11). The accounts in Edition Kh may be in connection to these episodes (some enemies may have been crippled, but did not die), but nothing more precise can be said. This suggests, however, that sources concerning his grandfather were consulted when Edition Kh was compiled, other than Sennacherib's annals which left room for no survivors. See a historical diagram of Sennacherib's campaigns against Elam and Babylonia in RINAP 3/1: 10-14.

beginning of the account mentions actions in the North, it ends with the punishment of figures of the South. This and further evidence from the royal correspondence has led scholars to believe that in fact two armies were involved in this campaign: the Assyrian troops in the North and an Assyrian installed governor in the Sealand (southern Babylonia).<sup>491</sup> Letters of Bel-ibni, the governor of the Sealand, show that he started his march in the South, with the aim of capturing the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate who continued his anti-Assyrian actions from Elamite bases, shortly after the conclusion of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion. It may be thus that the fugitive to Elam mentioned at the beginning of the campaign, whose son was captured and killed, may have been Nabû-bel-šumate, mentioned already in Elam 3 as the indirect cause of Indabibi's fall. Nabû-bel-šumate may have been wounded in battle in the South by Assyrian loyal subjects in the Sealand, but managed to escape to Bit-imbi in Elam (in the North) with his family. An attack was then launched against Bit-imbi for his capture, conducted by the Assyrian troops proper. From there he managed to escape again, since he was not captured, but his son was exemplary killed and flayed.

## 5. Edition G (646 BC)

The text has many missing parts and the exact ascription of *girrus* is not known. Only the (known) changes are noted in the following description.<sup>492</sup> The **Gambulu** matter is further expanded. The punishment for the Gambulian dignitaries Mannukiahhe and Nabû-usalli is described in a slightly longer account, but the section is too fragmentary to allow for a reading. Dunnanu and his brother Samgunu are described as images of *gallu*-demons (as was previously Teumman) and had their limbs cut off (Dunnanu is no longer said to have been slaughtered like a lamb). The position of the Arab campaign is changed, coming before **Elam 4**. A new passage is introduced right after the account on Ammuladin and his capture. It concerns the defeat and capture of queen Adija of Arabia, her tents being set on fire and her being brought to Assyria (the Arab affairs contains now **Arabs 1** and **Arabs 3**). Adija's capture is rendered as if the king was directly involved in the action, while the recounting of the rest of the Arabian affair is conducted by the generals, vassals or consists of voluntary submission, same as in Edition B (and C). The **Elam 4** campaign is introduced as *girru* 11 and was explicitly directed against the Elamite city Bit-imbi, called a base city of Elam (thus,

<sup>491</sup> Gerardi: 1987: 187-189 and Waters, 2000: 72-79.

<sup>492</sup> According to Novotny, 2008: 130-132

not against Ummanaldas proper). This justification may have just as well been contained by prism Kh in the corresponding part of the text, which is badly damaged. The inhabitants who did not submit were decapitated, had their lips cut off and were taken to Assyria for display. Imbappi, the commander of the Elamite archers, and Teumman's family were captured from Bit-Imbi and taken to Assyria, together with booty and musicians. Nothing is mentioned about their fate.

## 6. Edition F (645 BC)

Edition F is an abbreviated text, omitting several campaigns and shortening the remaining ones.

*Girru* 1, placed at the beginning of Ashurbanipal's kingship, was conducted in Makan and Meluhha (Egypt and Kush) against Tanutamoni – **Egypt 2**, skipping the previous campaign against Taharqa. For this, several adjustments from Editions B and C are made: Tanutamoni is introduced as king of Egypt and Kush, without specifying his forgetting the previous campaign of Ashurbanipal; Ashurbanipal refers to the local Egyptian rulers who embraced his feet as he marched through Egypt having been placed in their positions by Esarhaddon, omitting thus his own actions to reinstall them after Taharqa's take over; the passages recounting the booty are reduced and the concluding phrase of the bitter war inflicted upon Egypt is abandoned.

*Girru* 2 deals with the seacoast and Anatolian regions (Tyre, Arwad, Cilicia, Tabal and Lydia). The encounters are similar to B and C texts, but abbreviated by skipping some passages, without affecting the previous construction of events.

*Girru* 3 treats only the campaign against Ahšeri of Mannea (**Mannaeans**), omitting the encounter with the Medes (**Medes**) and the slaying of Urartian Andaria (**Urartu 1**); the Mannean campaign is shortened by skipping the night attack on the Assyrian camp. It also skips a large passage listing cities in one of the captured regions and the slaying of the commander Rajadišade.

*Girru* 4 treats **Elam 2** and **Gambuluas** as a single incursion and, like in Edition B, **Elam 3** is intertwined with the beginning of **Šamaš-šumu-ukin's rebellion**. The Babylonian rebellion proper is not recounted in Edition F.

**Elam 2**, concerning Teumman is greatly abbreviated and the information is adapted for this purpose. The target is not Teumman explicitly, but Elam, avoiding thus a full explanation of the context. Ashurbanipal acts at the command of a series of gods (no omens are mentioned anymore). It is still mentioned that he invaded Elam on a special date (month Elul, of the work of the Ištar goddesses, month of Assur and newly added Enlil). In first person, the king recounts having beheaded Teumman (said only to have planned evil against Ashurbanipal), slaying countless of his warriors and capturing others alive (with his own hands), followed by a short description of the horrid site at the battle scene. Ummanigaš and Tammaritu (I) were brought along and set on the Elamite thrones. Only at this point is a context briefly set, as they are the sons of Urtaki, king of Elam, and they fled from Teumman to Nineveh. The **Gambulu** affair is no longer a campaign in its own, but a continuation of **Elam 2**. Dunnanu, the Gambulean, was attacked on the return (a stock phrase which helped join more incursions in one single campaign), after Assyrian might had been proven in Elam. Dunnanu is accused of having put his trust in Elam. This episode too is greatly abbreviated. The residence of Dunnanu (Šapi-bel) was conquered and the inhabitants slaughtered like sheep during the battle. Dunnanu and his brother Samgunu, who troubled Ashurbanipal's kingship, were carried in chains to Nineveh, with captives and booty. The city Šapi-bel was destroyed and flooded. No account is given about further figures captured there and no horrid punishments. Next, the text very briefly recounts the **Elam 3** affair with its Babylonian implications. Ummanigaš, previously set on the Elamite throne by Ashurbanipal, sided with Šamaš-šumu-ukin, the treacherous brother (and no further details), and was killed by Tammaritu (II), who also aided the Babylonian king. Assur and Ištar, in answer to Ashurbanipal's prayers, worked that Tammaritu II was deposed by Indabibi, his servant. Tammaritu II sailed together with his family and 85 nobles to Assyria, where he became Ashurbanipal's servant. At the command of the gods he pled for Ashurbanipal's rulership and help to regain his position. Nothing is mentioned about Indabibi's relationship with Assyria or his dethronement by Ummanaldas.

*Girru 5* deals with the **Elam 4** campaign, which is rendered differently than in Editions Kh and G. It was directed against Ummanaldas, king of Elam and not the stronghold of Bit-imbi proper. No reason is explicitly formulated for the attack, but Tammaritu II is taken along. Thus, it is connected to the previous *girru*, which ended with Tammaritu pleading in front of Ashurbanipal for help to regain his position (on the throne of Elam). This latter fact was not part of the Edition Kh concerning Elam 3 and seems to have been introduced here to

accommodate a new setting for Tammāritu II. If indeed in Edition Kh the fragmentary passage mentioning Tammāritu II in the context of Elam 4 recounted his treacherous defection from Assyria to Elam, this is no longer kept in Edition F, but is reshaped as an act of Assyrian will to reinstall him in Elam. The start of the campaign is given a date – the month Simanu (III May-June), month of Sin, the lord of decisions; a precise date for a campaign occurred only once previously: the campaign against Teumman. Only these two campaigns are treated as such.

The inhabitants of two Elamite cities – Hilmu and Pillatu,<sup>493</sup> were overwhelmed at the news of the attack and rushed to Assyria in submission, with booty. Next, Bit-imbi is introduced only as an episode of the campaign, not a campaign in its own; it is a strategic city, which blocked the access to Elam like a great wall, with no other reasons for its attack (like refuge place of rebels connected to the Babylonian rebellion, as in text G and probably its predecessor Kh). It was captured and those of its inhabitants who did not submit were killed exemplary. Their heads were cut off, their lips pierced and they were carried to Assyria as a spectacle. The chief of the Elamite archers Imbappi and Teumman's family were also captured there and taken to Assyria. Only at this point is Ummanaldas actually mentioned; he fled Madaktu and took to the mountains fearful of the Assyrian advance in Elam. Same as in prism Kh, Umbahabua, who stood in opposition to Ummanaldas on the throne, fled from his residence Bubilū. Edition F introduces further information: Tammāritu II was enthroned as king in Susa, only to immediately turn against his benefactor and conceiving to attack the Assyrian troops stationed with him. This suggests that Ashurbanipal considered turning Elam into a region under direct control (with an Assyrian appointed king and Assyrian troops to stand guard for this arrangement). Assur and Ištar, who looked into the heart of Tammāritu, decided in Ashurbanipal's favor and cast Tammāritu down from his throne, making him take the road to Nineveh a second time. No actual facts for Tammāritu's downfall are given. This is followed by Ashurbanipal stating that he invaded Elam in its entirety and "on return" a full list of cities were plundered (25 names, among them Hamanu, Madaktu, Susa and Bubilū). All are said to have been destroyed and burned and their gods, citizens, animals and goods carried away to Assyria. Some cities are said to have been plundered two times (e.g. "Gatudu, again Gatudu"). The mention of the cities in the South (Pillatu and Hilmu) and then the list of

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<sup>493</sup> Both cities were at the border between southern Babylonia and Elam, but in Elamite territory, in the region inhabited by Gambulu populations. Gerardi, 1987: 186. See also their mentioning in ABL 1000, a letter from Bel-ibni to Ashurbanipal, in Waterman, 1933: 192-195.



cities in the North (Bit-imbi and the Susiana region) may have been the result of the scribe combining the effects of two actual armies advancing from the North (the Assyrian army proper) and the South (by Assyrian subject in the Sealand).<sup>494</sup> This seems to be supported by a series of contemporary letters.<sup>495</sup> However, a question remains about cities said to have been attacked two times “on return”. Does it indicate several military episodes or possibly two invasions in the northern part? Would any of them be connected to Tammaritu II’s treacherous defection from Assyria to Elam previously mentioned in Edition Kh? Or to an expedition of punishment against Tammaritu II’s immediate betrayal once set on the throne of Susa? The text does not give any clarifications on that. Nothing is said about Tammaritu’s fate at Nineveh after his second submission, or about who overthrew him from the Elamite throne and replaced him. Unlike in Edition Kh (and maybe G), there is no mention in Edition F of the flaying of Elamites previously crippled by Sennacherib and captured by Ashurbanipal during Elam 4; nor is there any reference to figures from southern Babylonia captured and judged in Assyria for their siding with Elam.

*Girru* 6 concerns the **Elam 5** campaign, directed again against Ummanaldas, but no reason given. However, it is conceived in connection to the previous *girru*, to which it refers. The Bit-imbi fortress, which was defeated in the previous campaign, was plundered again, together with Hamanu (also plundered in the previous *girru*) and the whole Raši region (in the Northern part of the Elamite territory). At the hearing of this news, Ummanaldas was overwhelmed by fear and left Madaktu for the fortress Dur-Undasi<sup>496</sup> (the city was cited as conquered and plundered two times in the list of 25 Elamite cities defeated in the previous *girru*). This suggests that the previous attacks on these cities were not as devastating as the inscription claims, since they could refill their stocks of goods in such short time. Ummanaldas made the river Idide his stronghold and prepared for battle. It may have been that Ummanaldas returned from his refuge place and dethroned Tammaritu II, but still not reason enough for the Assyrian attack, since Tammaritu II had already turned against Assyria. A series of 12 royal cities with their regions is listed having been conquered (in northern Khuzistan and Susiana, including Madaktu, Susa and Din-šarri) and another one follows as he advanced against Ummanaldas (Dur-Undasi). Without waiting for the rearguard

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<sup>494</sup> See Gerardi, 1987: 188-189.

<sup>495</sup> Gerardi, 1987: 185-191 and Waters, 2000: 72-73. The letters show military activity in the South, along the Babylonian-Elamite border, conducted by Bel-ibni, the governor set in position in the Sealand by Ashurbanipal.

<sup>496</sup> Dur-Undasi is modern Choga-Zanbil (South of Susa). Waters, 2000: 76 (fn. 42).

to arrive, Ashurbanipal and his soldiers crossed the river Idide and more 14 royal cities (without their name given), countless smaller cities and 12 regions were devastated and rendered into wasteland. Ummanaldas fled again to the mountains. More cities were conquered, 20 unnamed and 2 more with a name (Bannunu and Bašimu) at the border with Hidalu (another Elamite region, apparently functioning separately and in good relations with Assyria).<sup>497</sup> Their inhabitants were slain and their gods were crashed, in order to appease the heart of Assur. However, immediately the text says that people, gods, goods and animals were carried off to Assyria. Ashurbanipal is said to have advanced for a precise distance (equivalent of 600 km) in the Elamite heartland.<sup>498</sup> The text then returns to Susa in order to give a detailed account on its total devastation and looting. The dramatic moment is shaped by emphasizing the city's importance as treasury of Elamite kings since ancient times and religious center of Elam, only to continue with the destruction and looting of its palaces and temples by the Assyrian army. Goods plundered from Sumer and Akkad by the Elamites throughout history were captured. Considerable attention is given to precious goods (garments, furniture, vessels, gems), royal paraphernalia and military equipment that Šamaš-šumu-ukin himself had given to the Elamite kings for ensuring their support in his rebellion. The statues of the great Elamite gods were taken to Assyria, together with those of the Elamite kings (including Tammartu II's). Other gods were scattered to the wind, their temples burnt and their groves profaned. The graves of the Elamite kings who did not submit to Assyria were desecrated and their bones exposed and carried to Assyria, as to give their shadows no rest. Salt was poured on the soil of Elam to render it a waste land. All family members of Elamite kings and the dignitaries of the conquered cities, together with Elamite troops and population were taken to Assyria. Deprived of all human life and activities, the destroyed land turned into home for wild animals. Immediately follows an account of the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy through this military campaign. When he was destined for kingship by the gods, the Urukian goddess Nanaya (Inanna), who had been angry and left her city to dwell in Elam in ancient times, had selected Ashurbanipal to return her to Uruk. The time for the fulfillment of the prophecy had arrived and Ashurbanipal acquitted himself of his task. The campaign ends with the presentation of the booty taken from Elam to the great Assyrian gods, the enrolment of the Elamite soldiers within Ashurbanipal's royal troops and

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<sup>497</sup> Hidalu was the place where Tammartu I, son of Urtaki and brother of Ummanigaš, was enthroned after Teumman's decapitation.

<sup>498</sup> Exemplars of an earlier version of Edition F render this passage in a shorter form.

the division of Elamite captives, booty and animals between Assyrian cities and dignitaries. There is no information whatsoever about king Ummanaldas with whom the military account had started, suggesting that he eluded capture.

### 7. Edition T (645 BC)

Edition T is an even more abbreviated edition, rendering actually an abbreviated form of the 6<sup>th</sup> *girru* of Edition F concerning the Elam 5 campaign. It was directed against Elam (not Ummanaldas explicitly), whose king fled to the mountains. A summary of captured cities is given and salt being poured on their soil. No account of the destruction of Susa and temple violation is given. The emphasis is on the return of the Urukean goddess Nanaya to her city in Babylonia and the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy (in identical wording as Edition F).

### 8. Edition A (643 BC)

This is the longest of Ashurbanipal's annalistic editions. It follows Edition F text to a certain extent, but also differs in many regards. It reintroduces some of the military affairs omitted by the latter (Egypt 1, the Babylonian rebellion, Arabs 1 and 3) and adds new events.

*Girru* 1 and 2 consist of **Egypt 1** and **Egypt 2** campaigns, similar to Edition C.

*Girru* 3 concerning Anatolia and the seacoast (in similar wording as Edition C), adds two new episodes to the Lydian affair. Gyges betrayed his oath and aided Psammetichus of Egypt, who had thrown off the Assyrian yoke (**Lydia 2**). Ashurbanipal prayed to the gods that Gyges be slain by his enemies. The result did not hesitate to occur: the Cimmerians, whom Gyges had kept at bay due to his alliance with Ashurbanipal, invaded the country and killed the Lydian king. His son, however, acknowledging that his father's fate was the effect of Ashurbanipal's curses, submitted to Assyria (**Lydia 3**).

*Girru* 4 treats the Mannean affair, in the same wording as in Edition C.

*Girru* 5 puts together the campaigns against the Elamite king Teumman (**Elam 2**), Dunnanu the Gambulean (**Gambulu**) – both treated very briefly – and the beginning of the **Babylonian rebellion**. The campaign was directed against Elam (not Teumman proper), which was devastated, and the Elamite king, “who plotted evil”, was decapitated. Ummanigaš and Tammarišu I, who previously sought refuge in Nineveh fleeing from Teumman, were taken along and installed as kings in Elam. On return, Dunnanu the Gambulean was attacked and defeated for supporting Elam, and his family and the sons of the rebellious governor of

Nippur together with the bones of their father were taken to Nineveh. The beginning of the Babylonian rebellion is introduced with the expression “at that time”, setting it in connection with the previous events. The text gives a flashback of Ashurbanipal putting Šamaš-šumu-ukin on the Babylonian throne and endowing him with all royal requirements and more, exceeding the recommendations of their father Esarhaddon. But Šamaš-šumu-ukin forgot the good done and started plotting evil, speaking deceitfully and planning murder (no explicit details are given regarding the murderous intentions). The Babylonians, who previously behaved as proper guests at the royal banquet in Assyria and received precious gifts from Ashurbanipal, were turned by Šamaš-šumu-ukin into enemies. A detailed enumeration of those vassals who turned against Assyria is provided: people of Akkad, Chaldea, the Arameans, the Sea-land and several kings installed on their thrones by Ashurbanipal himself – Ummanigaš in Elam, the only one mentioned by name, and others in Gutium (in the Zagros regions), Amurru (in the West) and Meluhha (Ethiopia). Except for Elam, it is the first time that these regions are mentioned in connection to the Babylonian rebellion. The rebellion proper started by Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s closing the gates of the Babylonian cities and mounting soldiers on their walls. The plan of Šamaš-šumu-ukin is then revealed – to take Babylon (the seat of the gods) away from Ashurbanipal and deny him access to the temples which Ashurbanipal himself had rebuilt and provided for. The gods would not become impassible to such deeds and a seer received a message in a dream – a written message appeared on the surface of the moon foretelling the horrid death of those who would plot against Ashurbanipal: the iron dagger; fire and famine; and plague.

*Girru* 6 is dedicated to the defeat of the **Babylonian rebellion** and was explicitly conducted against Šamaš-šumu-ukin. It is intertwined with the political changes within Elam (**Elam 3**) and the Elamite rulers who supported the Babylonian uprising. The whole campaign is built as the fulfillment of the vision in the previous *girru*. The Babylonian cities were besieged and Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s warriors were defeated. The story of Ummanigaš (former fugitive at Nineveh, reinstalled by Ashurbanipal after Teumman’s death) is reduced only to the mention of his being the creation of Ashurbanipal and his accepting bribes from the Babylonian king. He then is dethroned by Tammaritu II who revolted against him. This uprising is no longer rendered explicitly as divine intervention.

*Girru* 8 is directed again against Ummanaldas (**Elam 5**) and follows largely the account in Edition F. However, it introduces further information. After the devastation of Susa and the retreat of the Assyrian troops, Ummanaldas returned from his mountain place of refuge to

Madaktu (suggesting thus that Elam was not as devastated as implied by the inscription). Ashurbanipal requested him to extradite the Chaldean rebel Nabû-bel-šumate, who had made common cause with all the Elamite kings against Assyria (Ummanigaš, Tammartu II, Indabibi and Ummanaldas).<sup>499</sup> At the news of an Assyrian messenger approaching, the Chaldean Nabû-bel-šumate committed suicide and Ummanaldas, fearful of another invasion, sent his corpse to Nineveh. Exemplary punishment was inflicted upon the corpse, which was not buried (“in order to make him more dead than he was”).<sup>500</sup> The head was cut-off and hanged to the neck of his brother, Nabû-kata-sabat (mentioned now for the first time), who was a faithful subject of Šamaš-šumu-ukin and who helped in rousing Elam in hostility to Assyria. Another character is introduced at this point for the first time – a certain Pa’e,<sup>501</sup> who ruled in opposition with Ummanaldas (same was said about Umbahabua in the first campaign against Ummanaldas). Overwhelmed by Assur’s bitter war in Elam, he fled to Assyria and paid homage. Refugees from the besieged cities, who had previously fled to the mountains, also submitted to Ashurbanipal; they were enrolled in the Assyrian army.

*Girru* 9 accounted all the actions conducted against the Arabs (**Arabs 1-4**). All four matters are rendered by Edition A as intertwined in order to project them closely connected to the Šamaš-šumu-ukin rebellion. However, certain confusions occurred during this editorial process. The account in Edition A begins with the campaign against Yauta, son of Hazael. Yauta (spelled here Uaite, due to confusion with Ouaite, son of Birdada, who would play a role during the Babylonian rebellion), king of the Arabs, is simply said to have sinned against the oath to Ashurbanipal, with no introduction about his previous submission. He had thrown off the yoke Assur imposed on him for pulling the rope of Ashurbanipal’s chariot and had stopped sending tribute. Like Elam, the Arab king paid heed to Šamaš-šumu-ukin’s words. He gave troops to Abiyate and Ayamu, sons of Te’ri, who commanded the Arab troops joining Šamaš-šumu-ukin and they plundered Assyrian lands. Thus, events taking place in different times (the plundering of Assyrian territories (Arabs 1) and the Arab participation in the Babylonian insurrection (Arabs 2)) are treated together as single event. Ashurbanipal defeated Yauta and his troops in several locations (in the West-lands, including Moab), but

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<sup>499</sup> This figure was of great interest to the Assyrians, as proven by a letter written by Ashurbanipal to the elders of Elam asking them to capture and deliver the rebel at the threat of war. See an analysis of this letter in Waters, 2002.

<sup>500</sup> Borger, 1996: 60, 243 (A§62, VII 46).

<sup>501</sup> Waters, 2000: 77.

the latter managed to flee to the land of Nabayyate. Continuing with his story, it is said that due to a loss of minds, Yauta (still called Ouaite), son of Hazael and cousin of Ouaite, son of Birdada,<sup>502</sup> goes by his own will to Assyria. However, he was not pardoned, but caged with a bear and a dog at the gate of Nineveh. The narrative shifts then to Ammuladi, king of Kedar, who attacked Assyrian territories in the West; trusting in the gods, Ashurbanipal defeated Ammuladi, who was captured together with Adija, called now the wife of Ouaite, king of Arabia, and brought in front of the king. It is no longer said that Ammuladi was actually defeated and captured by the Moabit king. Only Ammuladi's punishment is mentioned (chained with a dog chain and made to guard a kennel), while nothing is further said about Adija. The narrative moves next to Abiyate and Aimu, sons of Te'ri, who had gone to the aid of Šamaš-šumu-ukin while Babylon was on siege and were defeated both when they tried to enter the city and when they tried to leave it due to famine. Abiyate managed to escape, but came in submission to the Assyrian king, swore a loyalty oath and was placed on the Arab throne in place of Yauta (written Ouaite), son of Hazael. Soon he joined forces with Natnu, king of Nabayyate, and plundered Assyrian territories. Abiyate's story is thus changed – according to the earlier editions (B and C), he was positioned in the place of Yauta, son of Hazael, before the Babylonian rebellion, after Yauta was defeated and fled to Nabayyate territory. Only shortly after the Babylonian rebellion had started, he joined forces with the rebellious brother. Previous editions had Nabayyate and its king Natnu rendered in a positive light – Natnu willingly submitted to Assyria overwhelmed by its might. The inadvertences were explained by P. Gerardi to have stemmed from the scribe's effort to exhaust the story of a character the first time he is introduced in the narrative, leading to chronological and factual inaccuracies, but keeping a logic steam.<sup>503</sup> The account moves then to Natnu, king of the land of the Nabayyate, to whom Yauta, son of Hazael, had fled after his defeat. He recognized in first instance the Assyrian might, but then joined the rebellion of Abiyate and plundered Assyrian territories. A detailed account of distances and Arabian territories is then rendered during the campaign against Abiyate and Ouaite (son of Birdada). The Nabayyate tribes were and the Qedarites of Ouaite, son of Birdada (called king of Arabia) were defeated; booty and

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<sup>502</sup> The scribe came to a point where a differentiation was made between the figures he had confused or taken over already intermingled from his sources – Yauta, son of Hazael, of the earlier editions B and C and protagonist in the Arabs 1 encounter, shortly preceding the Babylonian rebellion, and Ouaite, son of Birdada, his cousin, who appears only in connection to the Arabs 2 affair, as supporter of Šamaš-šumu-ukin's uprising. See a disambiguation of the Arab account in Edition A in Gerardi, 1992.

<sup>503</sup> Gerardi, 1992: 92.

the family of Ouaite were captured and taken to Assyria. Finally Abiyate and Aimu were also captured and brought in chains to Assyria. Many of the rebels were made to perish by thirst, as Assyrian soldiers stood guard at the wells; so much booty and captives were taken to Assyria that slaves and camels were common goods among the inhabitants. The people of Ouaite were stroke by pestilence and famine and this punishment is described in terms of the curses of the loyalty oath Ouaite broke. Under these circumstances, and under the war thread by the Assyrian forces, the soldiers of Ouaite revolted against him, he managed to flee, but was captured by the Assyrian king. The whole Arab narrative is rendered as if the king was directly involved. Ouaite was brought to Assyria and the king pierced his chin and passed a rope through his jaw. He was chained with a dog chain and made to guard an inner gate of Nineveh. But his life was spared. After exhausting the story our Ouaite's capture and punishment, the narrative returns to the battle, recounting the several cities which were destroyed and plundered "on return" and the severe punishments suffered by the rebellious inhabitants. Soldiers left alive were enrolled in the Assyrian troops. While nothing is further mentioned about Abiyate after his capture, his brother Aimu is said to have been flayed at Nineveh.

Three other episodes are introduced at the end of the military achievements, but without separated in any way from the last *girru* concerning the Arabs. After these events, the narrative continues, Ummanladas, king of Elam, ordered by the gods from old times to serve Ashurbanipal, fled from his throne during an internal uprising against him, took to the mountains, but was caught by the Assyrian king in his place of refuge and brought to Nineveh. Next, several Elamite royalties –Tammaritu II, Pa'e and Ummanaldas, who were now bearing Ashurbanipal's yoke through the might of the gods, together with the Arab king Ouaite, defeated at the command of Assur and Ištar, were made to literally bear the yoke of Ashurbanipal's couch during the *akitu* ceremonial to the temple gate, which took place in the presence of the army. The last episode has the king of Urartu send his gifts to the Assyrian king at the hearing of Ashurbanipal's victories.

**9. Edition H** is very fragmentary. The preserved military campaigns account very briefly one after another the capture of Thebes in Egypt; defeat of Tyre; Mannaeans; Elam 1; Elam2;

Dunanu; Elam 3; newly adding the willing submissions of Cyrus and the king of Hudimiri,<sup>504</sup> overwhelmed by the devastation of Elam.

**10. Edition J** is also very fragmentary. From the military campaigns only little information survives: the defeat of **Tyre**, submission of **Arwad**, the defeat of **Mannaeans** and, the most detailed account – the affairs concerning the Cimmerian chieftain **Tugdammu**. The latter is identical, but better preserved in the Ištar temple inscription.

**11. The Ištar Temple inscription** lists the military victories in very brief entries. They were enumerated one after another, not in chronological order, but more in a geographical arrangement: capture of Thebes; Tyr; Arwad and Cilicia; Lydia; Mannea; Elam 2; moving goddess Nanaya (with no prophecy); Elamite kings Tammaritu, Pa'e and Ummanaldas becoming Ashurbanipal's slaves; Gambulu; suicide of Nabû-bel-šumate; Šamaš-šumu-ukin's betrayal and death by fire at the hands of Enlil and Marduk; Arab king Ouaité's defeat (no further context); capture of Arab Ammuladi; willing submission of Cyrus and the king of Hudimiri; back to the Elamite kings Tammaritu, Pa'e and Ummanaldas, who, together with Arab king Yauta pulled Ashurbanipal's chariot in procession; willing submission of Urartu king; defeat of Natnu, king of Nabayyate and imposition of tribute on his son; willing submission of several kings from various regions – Dilmun, Luppi, Qade, the steppe (close to Dilmun); defeat of king of Tabal and willing submission of his son; and lastly the Tugdammu threat. The position of the military affair in Tabal is given a second last position, because its story is related to the following story of Cimmerian Tugdammu. While Mugallu, king of Tabal, acknowledged Assyrian might and sent a daughter with dowry to Nineveh, his son, Mussi stopped sending tribute and cast lots with Tugdammu, the Cimmerian, characterized as "seed of destruction". The god Assur let him burn by fire and without using any bows or taking any battle his family and goods were made to pass in Assyria. The narrative turns then to Tugdammu, himself, the mountain king and arrogant Gutean, who brought his army ready to invade Assyria. He settled his camp on Assyrian grounds, triggering the wrath of Assur and the great gods. In effect, fire came down from the sky and burned his camp. Fearful, Tugdammu withdrew his army and sent messengers for good relations. A treaty was sworn that Tugdammu would not cross Assyrian boundaries and tribute was imposed on him.

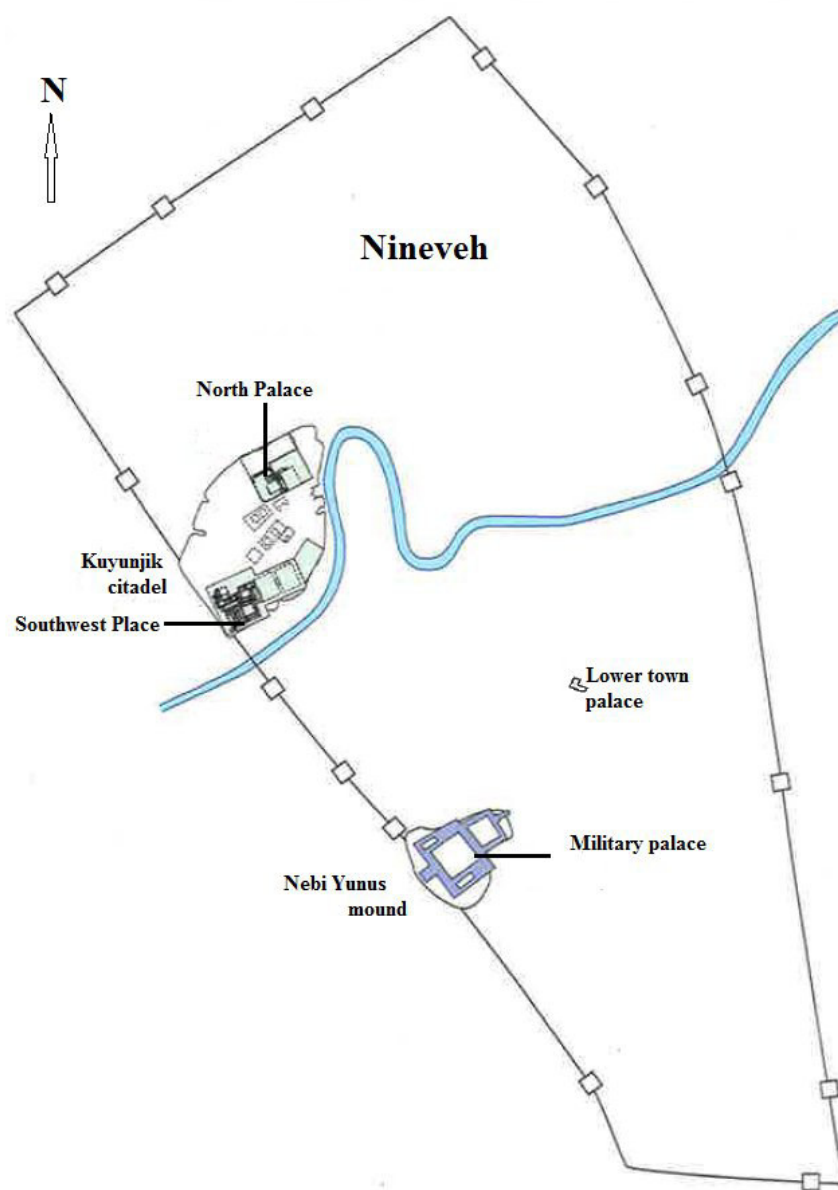
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<sup>504</sup> Peripheral district and city in Elam, mentioned only in Ashurbanipal's documents, which must have been located where the Ulai River flew into the Persian Gulf in antiquity. See <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hudimiri> (June 2015).

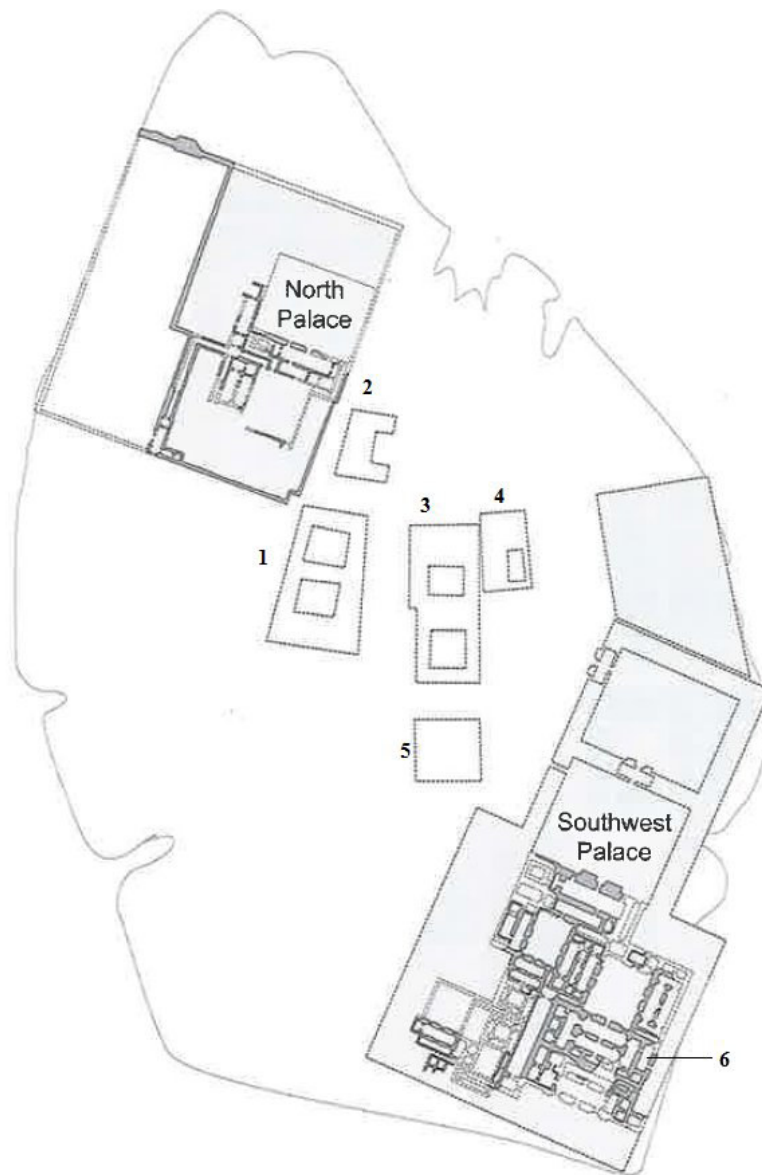


However, he did not abide to his oath and Tugdammu crossed the boundaries with the intention of invasion again. A second time the gods intervene and the shine of their weapons make him lose his mind and bite his own hands. He was stroke by an illness which had his body decompose and liquefy in agony. He and his servant hit themselves to death praising Assur.

## Plates

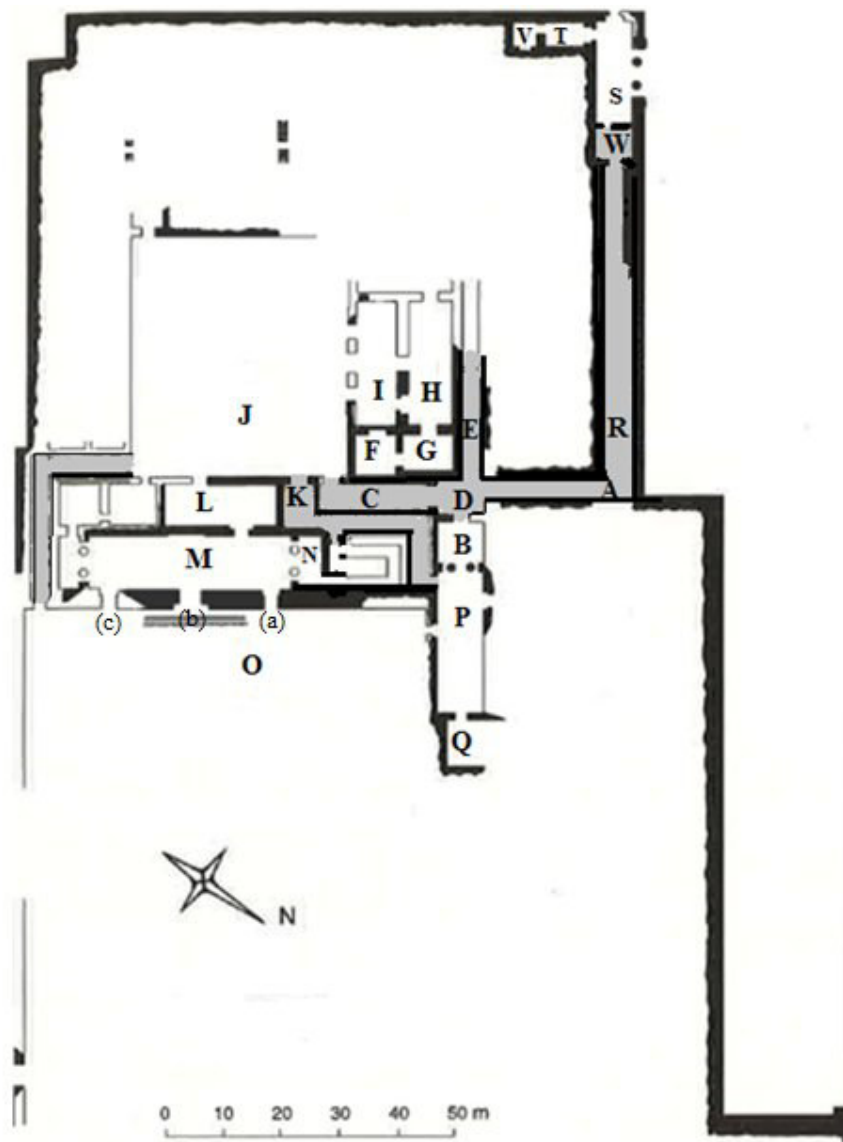


**Pl. 1.** Plan of Nineveh (after D. Kertai, 2015: Pl. 16 B).



**Pl. 2.** Kuyunjik citadel at Nineveh (after D. Kertai, 2015, Pl. 16 A)

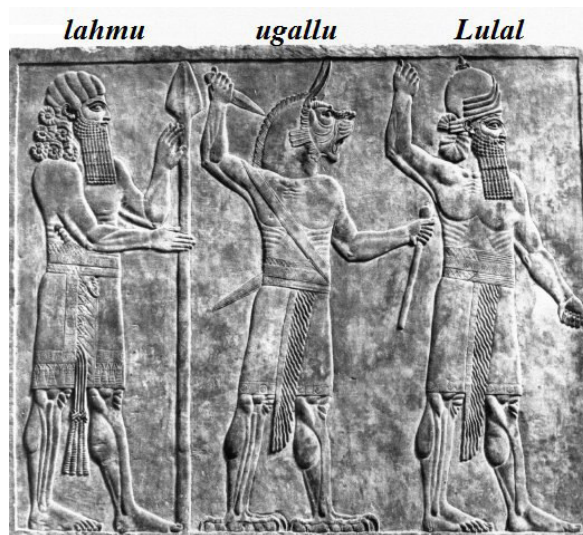
1. Sin-Šamaš temple (?); 2. Nabû temple; 3. Ištar temple; 4. Kidmuri temple; 5. Ziggurat (?); 6. Room 33 with Assurbanipal's reliefs (campaign against Teumman and Dunnanu).



**Pl. 3.** Reconstructed plan of the North Palace (after J. Reade, 2000: 417, Fig. 12); the gray shade marks the communicating system of passages.



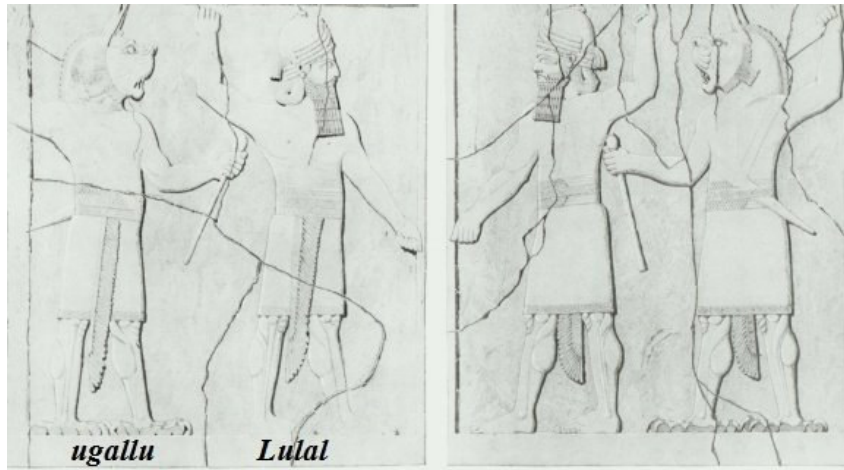
**Pl. 4.** Slab 4 at recess of main entrance (b) of the throne room, facing outer courtyard, depicting *Sebetti*; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXVIII).



**Pl. 5.** Protective figures on doorjambs of Room B, similar to those of doorjambs at entrance (b) to the throne room; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. IV).

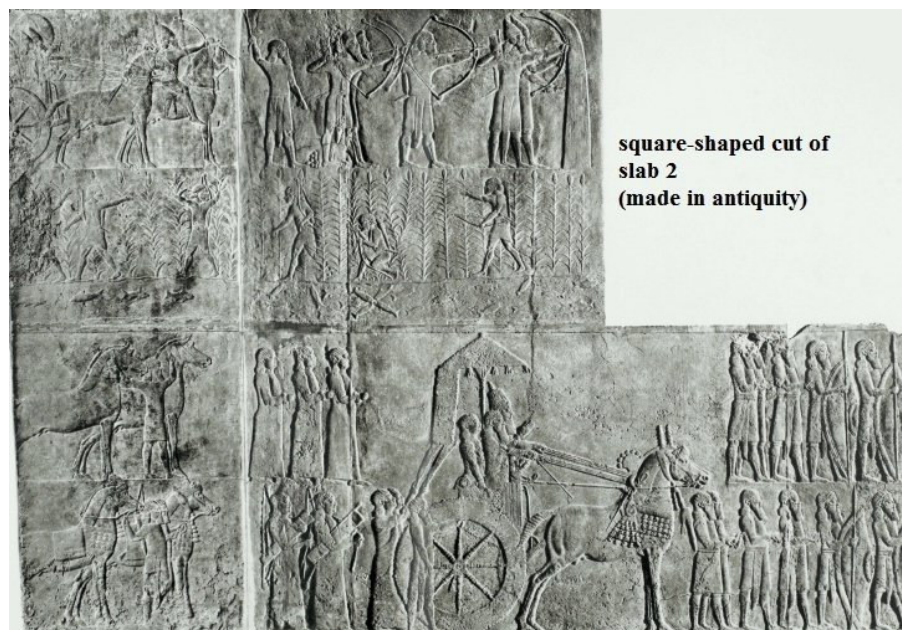


**Pl. 6.** Fragment from slab 1 (?), Room I; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXIV).

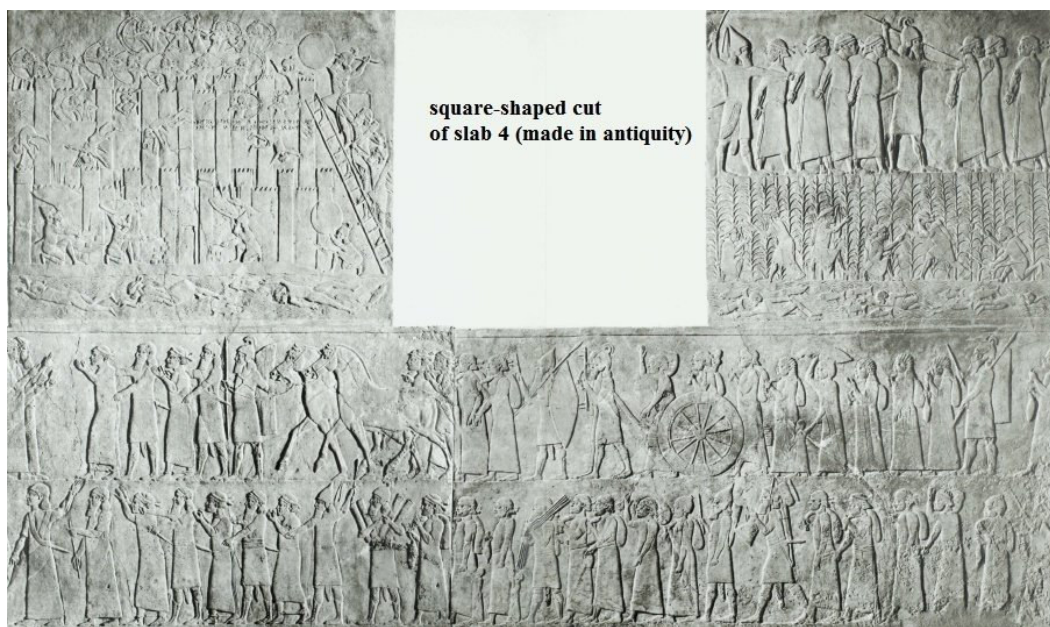


**Pl. 7.** Pair of protective figures on the doorjambs of Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal.  
Drawing by W. Boucher (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXI).





**Pl. 8.** Slabs 1-2, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XVI).



**Pl. 9.** Slabs 3-4, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XVII).



**Pl. 10.** Slabs 5-6, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XVIII).

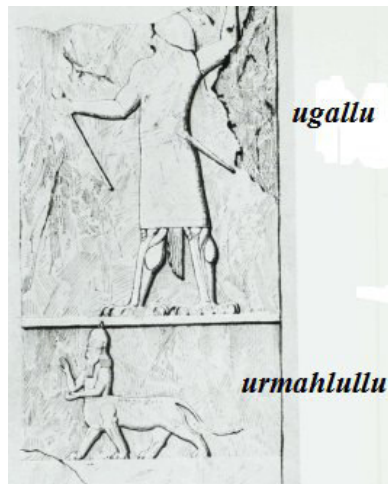


**Pl. 11.** Slabs 7-9, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XIX).

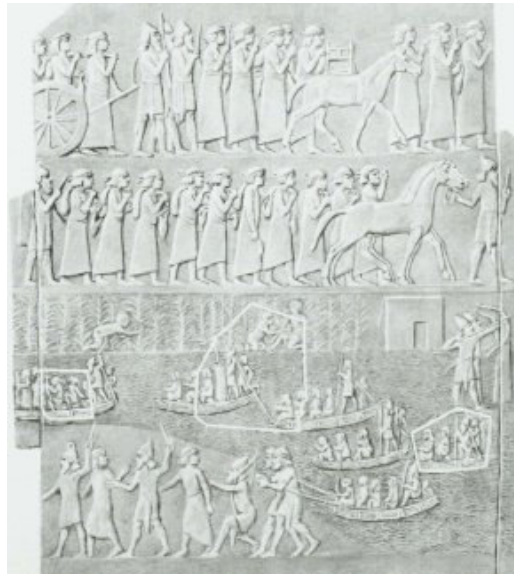




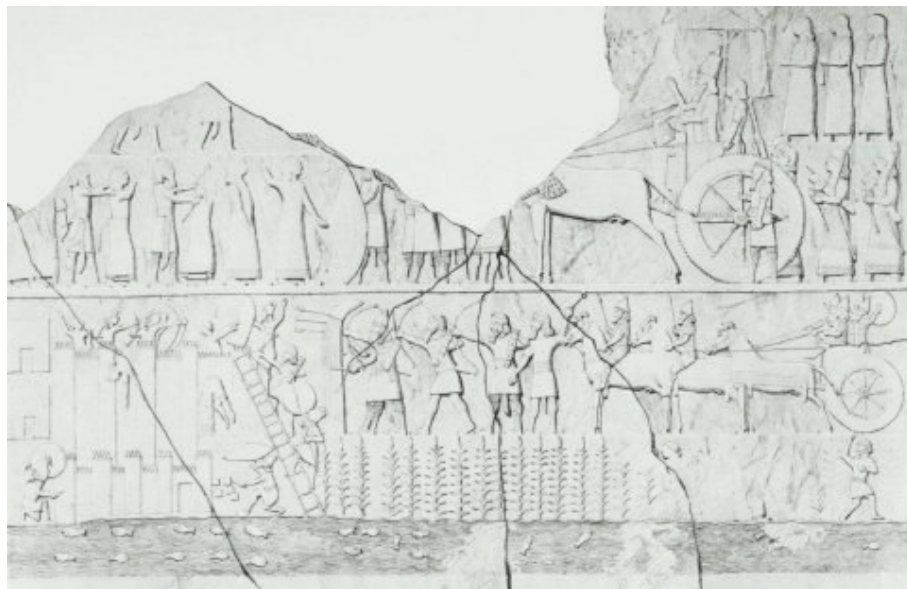
**Pl. 12.** Slab 10, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Drawing after a photo taken around the time of discovery (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XX).



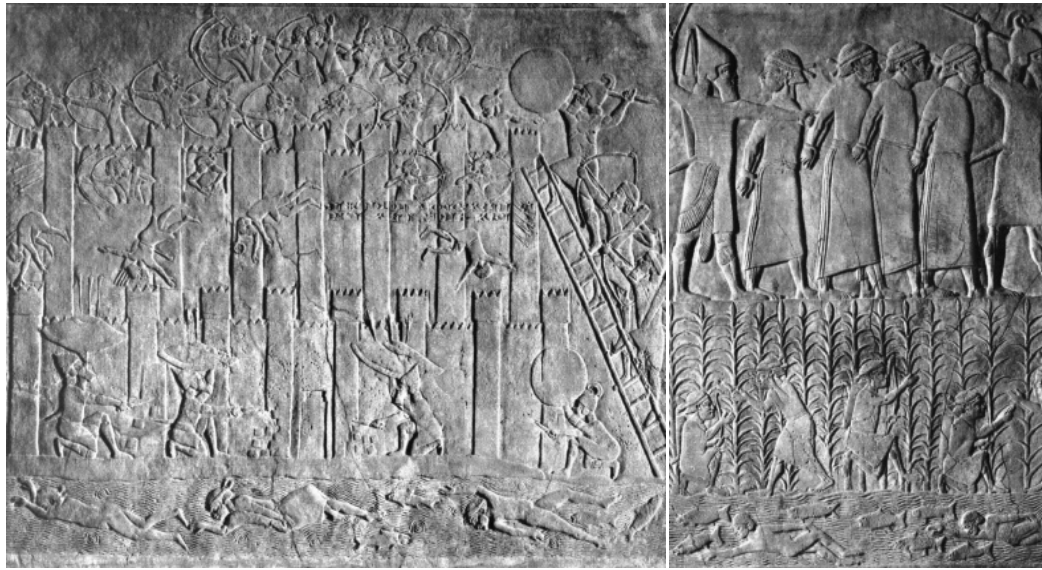
**Pl. 13.** Slab 11 (identical with slab 13), Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Drawing by W. Boucher around the time of discovery (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XX).



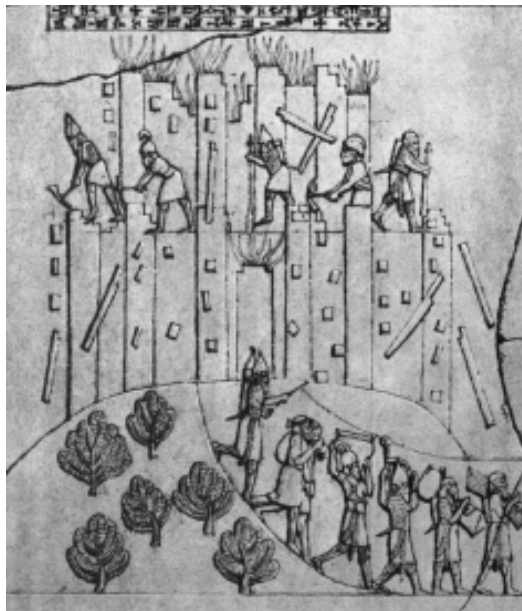
**Pl. 14.** Slab 14, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Drawing after photo taken in 1969  
(after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XX).



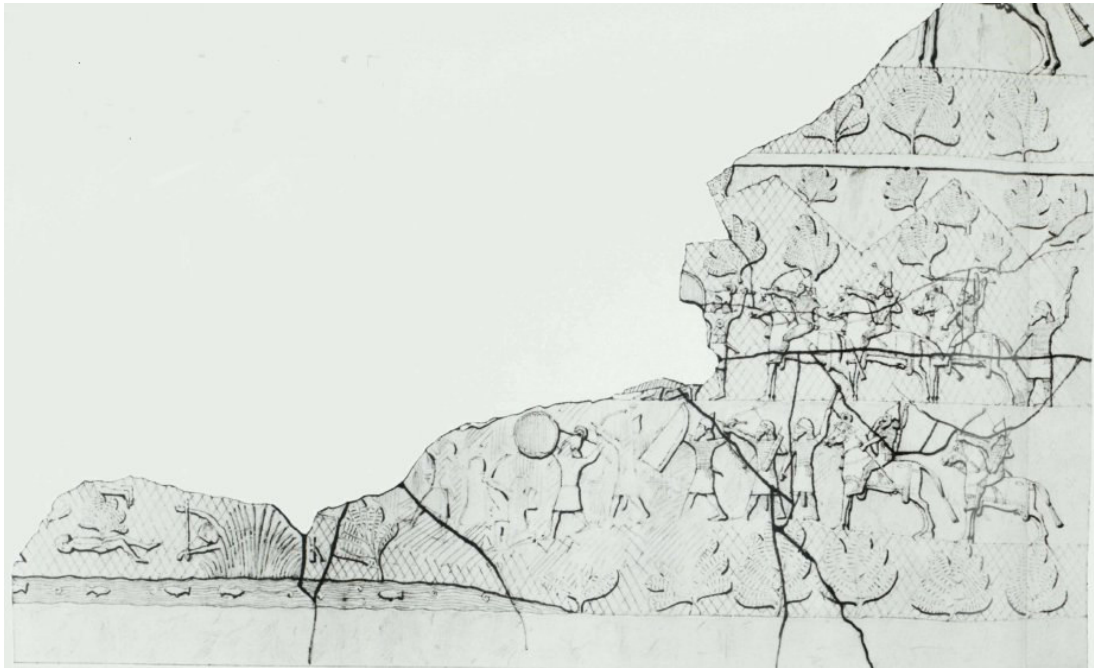
**Pl. 15.** Slab 15, Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Drawing by W. Bouché around the time  
of its discovery (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXI).



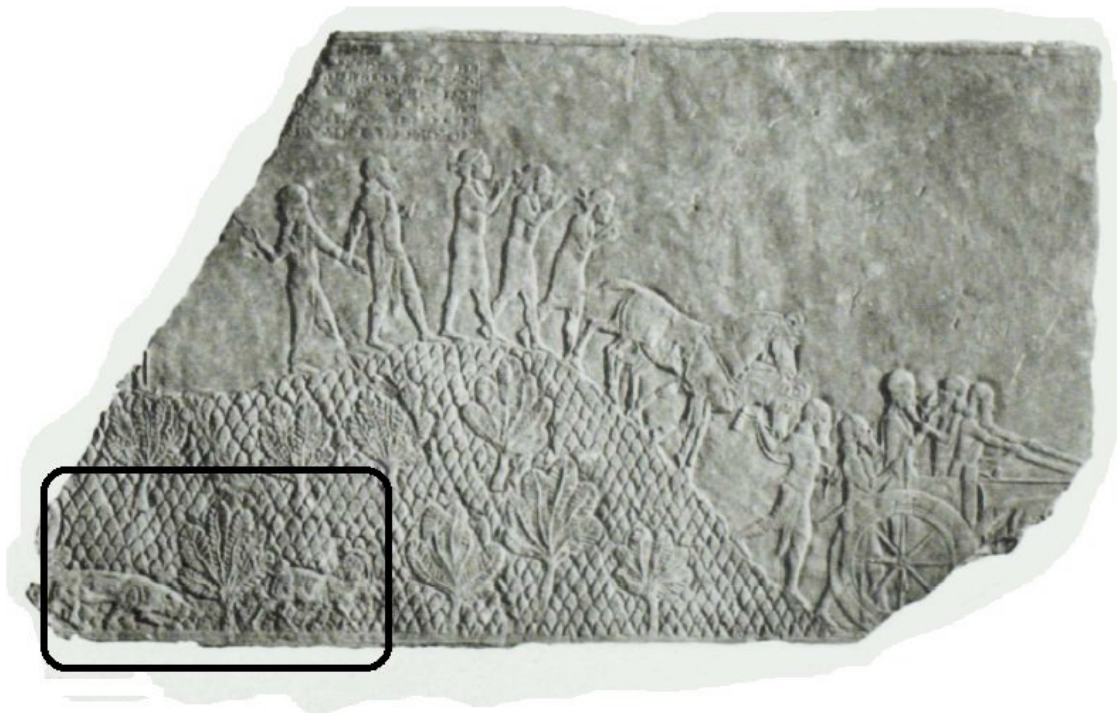
**Pl 16.** Details of slabs 3-4 in Room F; North Palace of Assurbanipal. City of Hamanu set in river and tall reeds landscape (R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XVII).



**Pl. 17.** Detail of slab A, fallen S<sup>1</sup> reliefs; North Palace of Assurbanipal. City of Hamanu set on a mound and dwarf trees landscape (R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. LXVI).



**Pl. 18.** Slab 7, W. Boutcher's drawing, Room M, Southwest wall; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXIV).



**Pl. 19.** Fragment of unknown slab (1-5, after the recess, or 10-11?) in Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXIV). Emphasis is on the stalking lioness and ibex scene.

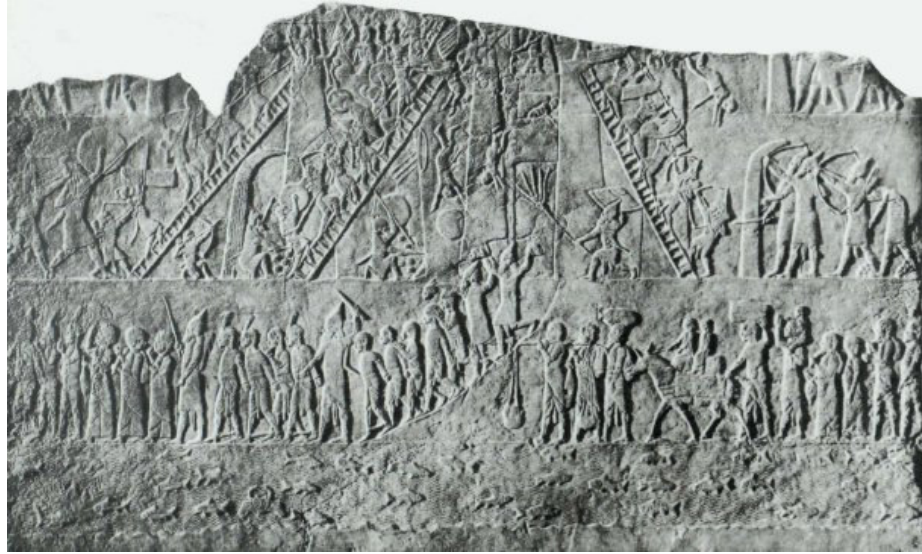


**Pl. 20.** Detail of slab 12-13, second register, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXV).

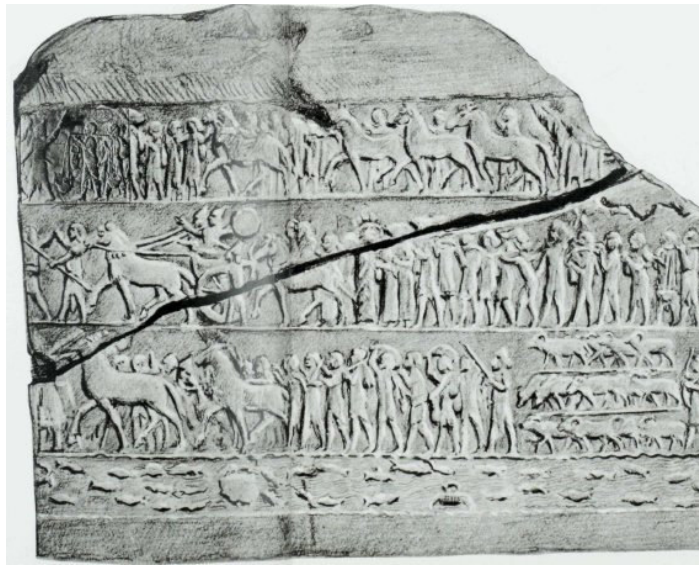


**Pl. 21.** Detail of slab 12, lower register, middle band, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal (after R. D. Barnett, Pl. XXXV).

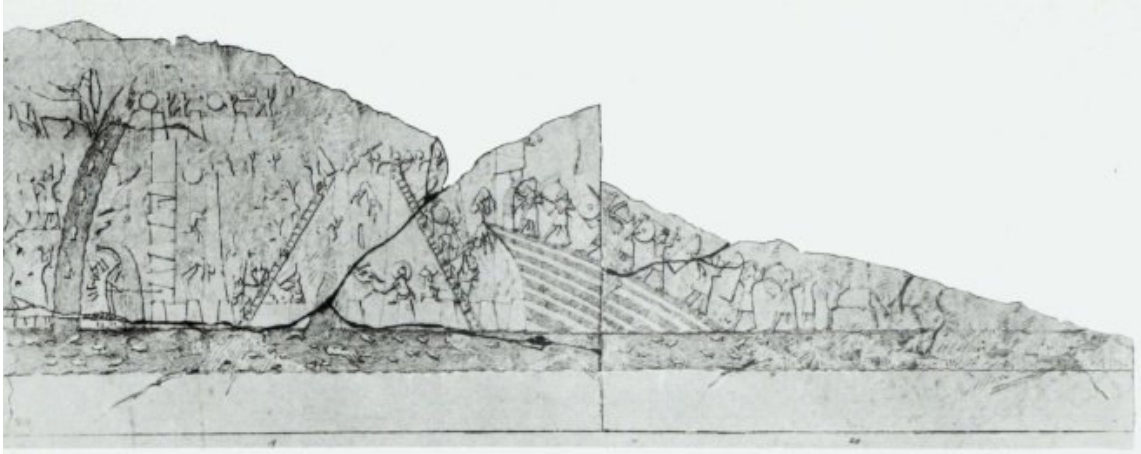




**Pl. 22.** Fragmentary slab 17, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Siege of an Egyptian city  
(after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXVI).



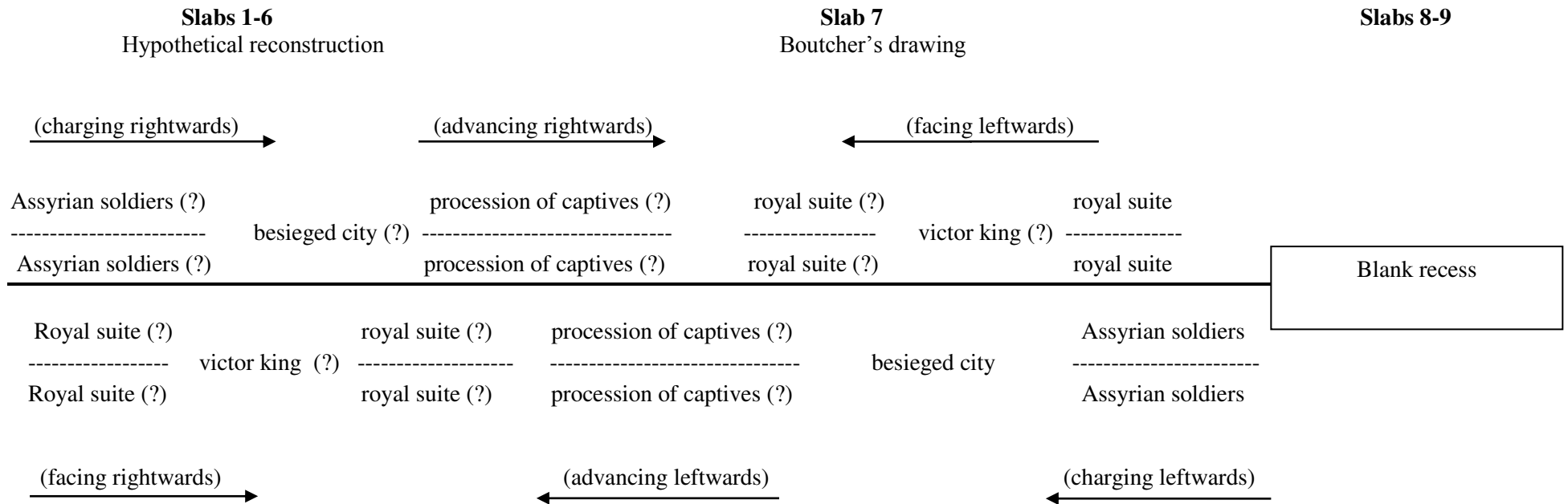
**Pl. 23.** Slab 18, reconstructed from W. Boutcher's photo, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal  
(after R. D. Barnett, 1976, Pl. XXXVI).



**Pl. 24.** Slabs 19-20, W. Boutcher's drawing, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Siege of an Egyptian city (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXVI).



**Pl. 25.** Slabs 22-23, W. Boutcher's drawing, Room M; North Palace of Assurbanipal. Rear part of the royal suite (after R. D. Barnett, 1976: Pl. XXXVI).

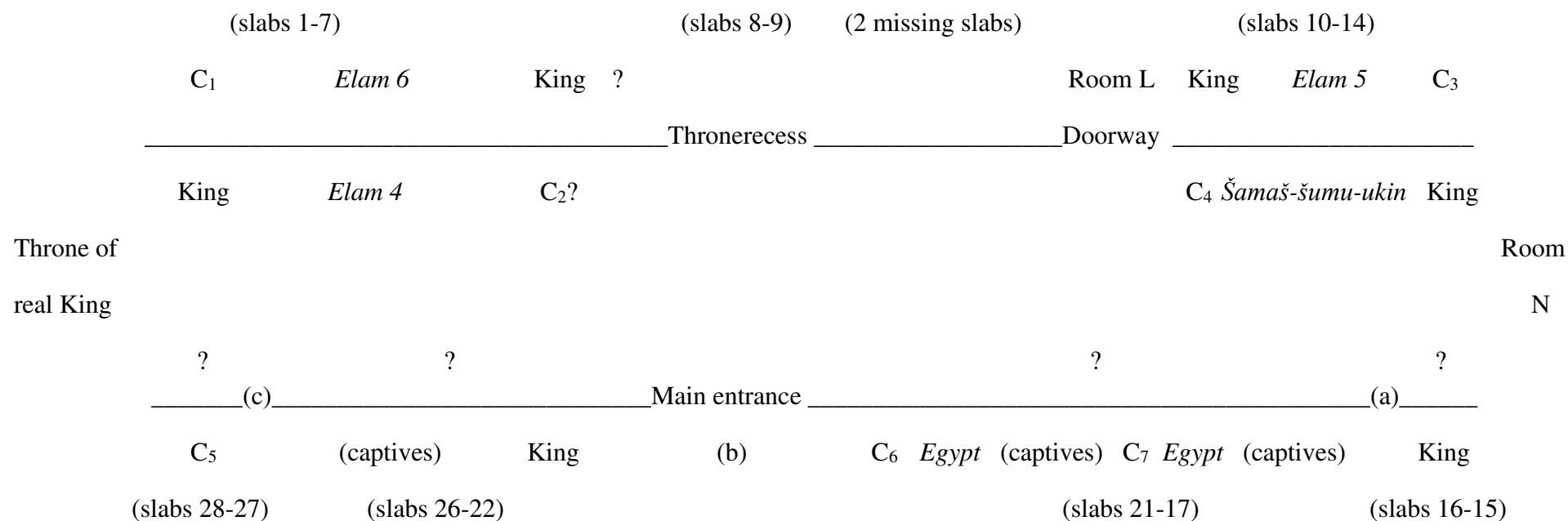


**Pl. 26.** Hypothetical scheme of the visual narrative in slabs 1-7, SE wall of Room M, North Palace. Proposed technique: symmetry through reversal. Continuous line indicates line between two registers; interrupted line indicates arrangement of the scene in two bands; arrows indicate direction of movement.



# Throne room M, North Palace

## SE wall



## NW wall

**Pl. 27.** Hypothetical reconstruction of scenes in Room M, North Palace:

C<sub>1</sub> – Elamite city Murubišu (?); C<sub>2</sub> – Elamite fortress Bit-imbi (?); C<sub>3</sub> – Elamite city Susa (?); C<sub>4</sub> – city of Babylon (?); C<sub>5</sub> – Egyptian city; C<sub>6</sub> – Egyptian city; C<sub>7</sub>

– Egyptian city; (two of the Egyptian cities may have been Memphis and Thebes);

(a), (b) and (c) – entrances to the throne room from the outer Court O.